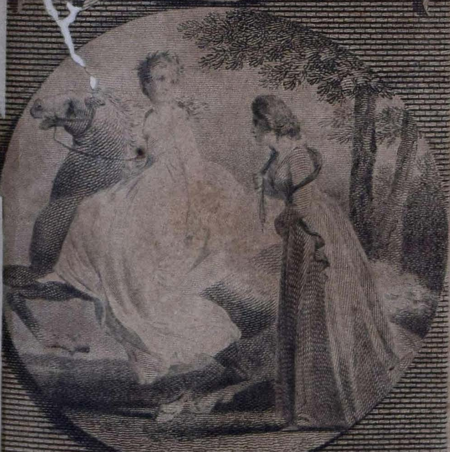
BELL'S EDITION.

The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN

COMPLETE FROM

CHAUCER to CHURCHILL.

693



CHAUCER VOL. XII.

Madame, quoth I, if that I durst enquere
Of you, I wold fain of that company
Wit what they be ——

The Flower & the Leaf, line 453 &c.

[...]hard delin. *Heath sculp.*

[Lo]ndon Printed for John Bell British Library Strand May 1st 1783.

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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

VOL. XII.

CONTAINING HIS

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, *viz.*

ANNELIDA AND ARCITE,	FLOURE AND THE LEAFE,
COMPL. OF BLACKE KNIGHT,	COURT OF LOVE,
COMPL. OF MARS AND VENUS,	REMEDIE OF LOVE,
LAM. OF M. MAGDALEINE,	PROPHECIE,

&c. &c. &c.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale ſain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath ſayd hem in ſwiche Engliſh as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not ſayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath ſayd hem in another----
Who ſo that wol his large Volume ſeke. TALES, *ver.* 4465.

Dan CHAUCER, well of Engliſh undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geffrey, in whoſe gentle ſpright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilſt he lived was the ſoveraigne head
Of ſhepherds all------- SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning ſtar,
To us diſcovers day from far;
His light thoſe miſts and clouds diſſolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he deſcending to the ſhades
Darkneſs again the age invades. DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who firſt with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers---His legends blithe
He ſang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each eſtate and age
The faſhions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying-----
Him who in times------
Dark and untaught began with charming verſe
To tame the rudeneſs of his native land. AKENSIDE.

EDINBURG:
AT THE Apollo Preſs, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1782.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From *Urry's* Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From *Tyrwhitt's* Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----
Of ditees and of ſonges glade,
The which he---made,
The londe fulfilled is over all. GOWER.

My maiſter CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne----
Whom all this londe ſchulde of ryght preferre,
Sith of our langage he was the lode-ſterre----
That made firſt to dyſtylle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of ſpeche and eloquence
Into our tunge thrugh his excellence. LYDGATE.

The honour of Engliſh tong is dede----
My mayſter CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
Univerſel fadir in ſcience----
This londis verray treſour and richeſſe----
The firſte fynder of our fayre langage. OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,
Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,
In eloquence balme, condict and diall,
Mylky fountane, clere ſtrand, and rois riall,
Of freſche endite throw Albioun iland braid. DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! roſe of rethouris all,
As in oure toung flour imperial
That raiſe in Brittane evir, quha reidis right
Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,
The freſche enamilt termes celeſtiall:
This mater couth haif illuminit full bricht,
Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,
Surmounting every toung terreſtriall
As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight. DUNBAR.

VOL. XII.

EDINBURG:
AT THE Apollo Preſs, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1782.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. THE TANJORE

MISCELLANIES.

OF QUENE

ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE.

Arcite a Theban knight forſaketh Queen Annelida, who loved him entirely, and taketh a new lady, whereupon Annelida maketh this great complaint.

O Thou fiers god of Armis, Mars the Rede,
That in thy froſtie countrey callid Thrace
Within thy griſly templis full of drede
Honourid art as patrone of that place,
With the Bellona, Pallas full of grace,
Be preſent, and my ſong continue' and gie;
At my beginnyng thus to the I crie.

For it full depè is ſonkin in mynde
With pitous herte in Engliſhe to endite
This olde ſtorie, in Latine whiche I finde,
Of Quene Annelida and falſe Arcite,
That elde, whiche all thingis can frete and bite,
And it hath fretin many' a noble ſtorie,
Hath nigh devourid out of our memorie.

Be favourable' eke thou Polymnia,
On Parnaſſus that with thy ſuſtirs glade
By Helicon, and not ferre from Cirrha,

Singiſt with voice memoriall in the ſhade,
Undir the laurir, which that maie not fade,
And doe that I my ſhip to havin winne:
Firſt followe' I Stace, and aftir him Corinne. 21

Jamque domos patrias, Scythicæ poſt aſpera gentis
Prælia, laurigero ſubeuntem Theſea curru
Lætifici plauſus, miſſuſque ad ſidera vulgi, &c.

When Theſeus with warris long and grete
The aſpre folke of Scythe hath ovircome,
The laurir crounid, in his chaire golde bete
Home to his countre houſis is icome,
For whiche the peple blisfull all and ſome
So cridin that to the ſterris it went,
And hym to honourin did all ther entent. 28

Before this duke in ſigne of victorie
The trompis come, and in his banir large
The' image of Mars; and in token' of glorie
Men mightin ſe of treſure many' a charge,
Many' a bright helme, and many' a ſpere and targe,
Many' a freſhe knight, and many' a blisfull rout
On horſe and fote, in all the field about. 35

Hyppolyta his wife, the hardie Quene
Of Scythia, that he conquerid had,
With Emelie her youngè ſuſtir ſhene,
Faire in a chare of golde he with him lad,
That al the ground about her chare ſhe ſprad
With brightneſſe of the beautie in her face,
Fulfillid all of largeſſe and of grace. 42

With his triumph and laurir corouned thus
In all the floure of Fortun'is yevyng
Lete I this noble prince, this Theſeus,
Toward Athenis in his waie ridyng,
And fonde I woll in ſhortly for to bryng
The ſlie waie of that I began to write
Of Queene Annelida and falſe Arcite.
Mars, that through his furious courſe of ire,
The oldè wrathe of Juno to fulfill,
Hath ſet the peplis hertis bothe on fire
Of Thebes and Grece everich othir to kill
With blodie ſperis, reſtid nevir ſtill,
But throng now here now there emong 'hem both,
That everiche othir ſlue, ſo were thei wroth:
For when Amphiorax and Tydeus,
Hippomedon and Parthenope' alſo
Were dedde, and ſlain was the proude Capaneus,
And when the wretchid Thebans brethrin two
Were ſlain, and Kyng Adraſtus home ago,
So deſolate ſtode Thebis and ſo bare
That no wight could remedie of his care.
And when that the old Creon gan eſpie
How that the blode roiall was brought adoun
He helde the cite by his tyrannie,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To ben his frendis and dwell in the toun;
So what for love of him, and what for awe
The noble folke were to the toune idrawe.

Emong all these Annelida the Quene
Of Ermonie was in that toune dwellyng,
That fairir ferre was than the sonnè shene;
Throughout the worlde so gan her name to spryng,
That her to se had every wight likyng,
For as of trouthe ne is there none her liche
Of all the women in this worldè riche.

Yong was this quene, of twentie yeris olde,
Of middle stature, and of soche fairenesse
That Nature had a joye her to beholde;
And for to spekin of her stedfastnesse,
She passid hath Penelope' and Lucresse;
And, shortlie, if she shall ben comprehended,
In her there mightin nothyng ben amended.

This Theban knight Arcite eke, sothe to saine,
Was yong, and therwithal a lustie knight,
But he was double' in love and nothing plaine,
And subtil in that crafte ovre' any wight,
And with his connyng wan this ladie bright,
For so ferforthe he gan her trouth assure
That she hym trustith o'er any creture.

What should I saine? she lovith Arcite so
That when that he was absent any throwe
Anone her thought her hertè brast a two,
For in her sight to her he bare hym lowe,
So that she wende have all his herte iknowe;
But he was false, it n'as but fainid chere,
As nedith not soche craftis men to lere.

But nerthèleſſe full mikill buſineſſe
Had he er that he might his ladie winne,
And ſwore that he would dyin for diſtreſſe,
Or from his witte he ſayid he would twinne;
Alas the while! for it was routhe and ſinne
That ſhe upon his ſorowis would rue;
But *Nothing thinketh the falſe as doth the true.*

Her fredome found Arcite in ſoche manere
That al was his that ſhe hath, moche or lite,
Ne to no manir creture made ſhe chere
Furthir then as it likid to Arcite;
Ther was no lack with which he might her wite;
She was ſo ferforthe yevin him to pleſe
That all that likid hym did her to eſe.

There n'as to her no manir lettir ſent,
That touchid love, from any manir wight,
That ſhe ne ſhewid hym or it was brent,
So plain ſhe was, and dyd her fullè might
That ſhe n'ill hidin nothyng from her knight,
Left he of any untrouthe her upbreide;
Withoutin bode his hertè ſhe obeide.

And eke he made hym jelous ovir her,
That what that any man had to her ſaied
Anon he would yprayin her to ſwere
What was that worde, or make him ill apaied;
Then wenid ſhe out of her witte have braied:
But all was nought but ſleight and flattirie;
Withoutin love he fainid jelouſie.

And all this toke ſhe ſo debonairly
That al his wil her thought it ſkilful thyng,
And er the lengir loved hym tendirly,
And did hym honour as he were a kyng;
Her herte was to hym weddid with a ryng,
For ſo ferforthe on trouthe is her entent
That where he goith her hert with him went.

Whan ſhe ſhal ete on him is ſo her thought
That wel unnethis of mete toke ſhe kepe,
And whan that ſhe was to her reſt ybrought
On him ſhe thought alway tyl that ſhe ſlepe,
Whan he was abſent prively dothe ſhe wepe:
Thus livith faire Annelida the Quene
For falſe Arcyte, that dyd her al this tene.

This falſe Arcyte, of his newfangleneſſe,
For ſhe to him ſo lowly was and trewe,
Ytoke leſſe deintè for her ſtedfaſteneſſe,
And ſawe anothir lady proude and newe,
And right anon he clad him in her hewe,
Wote I not whethir in white, red, or grene,
And falſid faire Annelida the Quene.

But nerthèleſſe, grete wondir was it none
Though he were falſe, for it' is the kinde of man
Sithe Lamech was, that is ſo longe agone,
To be in love as falſe as er he can;
He was the firſtè fathir that began
To lovin two, and was in bigamie,
And he founde tentis firſt but yf men lye.

This falſe Arcite ſomwhat muſt he nede faine
Whan he was falſe to coveren his traitourie,
Right as an horſe that can both bite and plaine,
For he bare her in honde of trechirie,
And ſwore he coude her doubleneſs eſpye,
And al was falſeneſſe that ſhe to him ment;
Thus ſwore this thefe, and forth his way he went.

Alas! what hertè might endurin it
For routhé or wo her ſorowe for to tel,
Or what man hath the conning or the wit,
Or what man might within the chambre dwel,
If I to him reherſin ſhall the hel
That ſuffrith faire Annelida the Quene,
For falſe Arcite, that did her al this tene?

She wepith, wailith, ſwounith, pitouſly;
To grounde as ded ſhe fallith as a ſtone;
She crampiſhith her limmis crokidly;
She ſpekith as her witte were al agone;
Othir colour than aſhin hath ſhe none,
Ne none othir worde ſpeketh ſhe moch or lite
But *Mercy, cruil hertè min, Arcite!*

And thus endureth til that ſhe was ſo mate
That ſhe ne' hath fote on which ſhe may ſuſtene,
But forth languiſhing er in this eſtate,
Of which Arcite hath neithir rothe ne tene;
His herte was elliſwhere ſette new and grene,
That on her wo ne deineth him not to think;
Him reckith ner whethir ſhe flete or ſinke.

This newè lady holdith him ſo narowe
Up by the bridil at the ſtav'is ende,
That every worde he dred it as an arowe;
Her daungir made him bothè bowe and bende,
And as her luſte madin him turne or wende,
For ſhe ne grauntid him in her living
No grace why that he hath thereof to ſinge,

But drove him forth; unneth liſt her to knowe
That he was ſervaunt to her ladyſhip,
But leſte that he were proude ſhe held him lowe;
Thus ſervith he withoutin mete or ſip;
She ſente him nowe to lande and nowe to ſhip,
And for ſhe yave him daungir al his fil
Therfore ſhe had him at her ownè wil.

Enſample of this, ye thriftie women al,
Take hede of Annelida and falſe Arcite,
That for her liſt him her dere hertè call,
And was ſo meke, therefore he loved her lite;
The kinde of mann'is herte is to delite
On thing that ſtraunge is, al ſo God me ſave,
For what they may not get that wold they have.

Nowe turne we to Annelida ayen,
That pinith day by day in languiſhing;
But whan ſhe ſawe that her ne gate no geyn,
Upon a day ful ſoro'wfully weping
She caſt her for to make a complaining,
And with her ownè hande ſhe gan it write,
And ſente it to her Theban knight Arcyte.

The Complaint of Annelida to false Arcite.

So thirlid with the point of remembraunce
The swerde of sorowe, whette with false plesaunce,
Myne hertè bare of blisse and black of hewe,
That turnid is to quaking all my daunce,
My sewertye in wapid countinance,
Sens it availith nothing to ben trewe,
For who so trewe is certes it shall her rewe
That servith Love, and dothe her observaunce
Alway to one, and chaungith for no newe. 219

I wote my selfe as well as any wight,
For I loved one with al min hert and might,
More than my self an hundred thousande sith,
And callid him my hert'is lyfe, my knight,
And was al his as ferre as it was right,
And whan that he was glad than was I blithe,
And his disese ywas my dethe as swithe,
And he ayen his trouthe hath to me plight
For evirmore his lady me to kithe. 228

Nowe is he false, alas! and causèles,
And of my wo he is so routhèles
That with a worde him list not onis daine
To bring ayen my sorowful herte in pees,
For he is caught up in an othir lees;
Right as hym lyst he laughith at my paine,
And I ne can min hertè not restraine
For to love him yet alway nertheles,
And of all this I n'ot to whom to plaine. 237

And ſhulde I plain, alas the hardè ſtounde!
Unto my foe that yave myn herte a wounde,
And yet deſirith that myn harme be more?
Now certis ferthir woll I nevir founde
None othir helpe my ſoris for to ſounde,
My Deſtiny hath ſhapid ſo ful yore,
I woll none othir medècyne ne lore,
I woll ben aye there I was onis bounde,
That I have ſaid be ſaid for evirmore. 246

Alas! where is become your gentillneſſe,
Your wordes full of pleſaunce and humbleneſſe,
Your obſervaunce in ſo lowe a manere,
Your awaitinge, and eke your beſineſſe,
On me, that ye tho callid your maiſtreſſe,
Your ſovèraine lady in this worlde here?
Alas! is there now neithir worde ne chere
Ye vouchſafin upon myn hevineſſe?
Alas! your love I bye it al to dere! 255

Nowe certis, ſwete Arcitè! though that ye
Thus cauſèleſſe the rufull cauſe ybe
Of all my pyne and dedly'adverſite,
Your manly reaſon ought it to reſpite
To ſle your ſothefaſt frende, and namely me,
Which that have nevir yet in no degre
Offendid you in ought, as wiſly he
That all thinges wote of wo my ſoulè quite. 263

But for I was ſo plain to the Arcite
In all my wordes and workis moche and lite,

And was ſo beſy aye you to delite,
Myne honour only ſave, meke, kinde, and fre,
Therfore, Arcite, ye put in me this wite:
Alas! alas! ye rechin not a mite
Though that the percing ſwerde of ſorow byte
My woful hert thorough your cruilte. 271

My ſwetè foe! why do ye ſo for ſhame?
And thinkin ye that furthered be your name
To lovin a newe and ben untrewe aye,
And putin you in ſlaundir nowe and blame,
And do to me adverſyte and grame
That love you moſt, God thou wotiſt alwaye?
Yet turne ayen, and yet be plaine ſome daye,
And then ſhall this that now is mis ben game,
And al forgevin whilis I lyve maye. 280

Lo, hertè myne! al this is for to faine,
As whethir ſhal I praye or ellis plaine?
Which is the way to done you to be trewe?
For eithir mote I have you in my chaine
Or with the deth ye mote depart us twayne,
There beth none othir mene ne wayis newe,
For God ſo wyſely on my ſoulè rewe
As verily ye ſlaine me with the paine,
That mowe ye ſe unfainid on mine hewe. 289

For thus ferforth have I my deth yſought,
My ſelfe I murdir with my privie thought;
For ſorowe' and routhe of your unkindeneſſe

I wepe, I waile, I faſt; al helpith naught;
I voide alle joy that is to ſpeak of aught,
I voide alle company, I flye gladneſſe:
Who may avaunt her bet of hevineſſe
Than I? and to this plite have ye me brought.
Withoutin gilte; me nedith no witneſſe.
  And ſhoulde I pray and weivin womanhede?
Nay, rathir deth than do ſo foule a dede;
And aſke mercy and giltèleſſe? what nede?
And if that I complaine what life I lede
You reckith not, that know I out of drede;
And if I unto you mine othis bede
For mine excuſe, a ſcorne ſhal be my mede;
Your chere yflourith but it woll not ſede;
Ful longe agon I might have takin hede:
  For though I had you to morowe againe
I might as wel holde Aprilis from raine
As holdin you to makin you ſtedfaſt:
Almyghty God! of trouthe the ſoveraine,
Wher is the trouth of man? who hath it ſlaine?
She that 'hem lovith ſhall 'hem finde as faſt
As in a tempeſt is a rottin maſt.
Is that a tame beſt that is evir faine
To renne away when he is left agaſt?
  Nowe mercy, ſwete Arcite! if I miſſay;
Whethir have I aught ſaid out of the way
I n'ot; my witte is waſtid al away:
I fare as doth the ſonge of chantepleure,

For nowe I plaine and nowe agen I pley;
I am ſo maſid that I dey, I dey;
Arcite, Arcite, hath born away the key
Of al my wele and my gode avinture : 324

For in this world there ne is no creture
Walking, alas! in more diſcomfiture
Than I, ne that more ſorowe doth endure,
For yf I ſlepe a furlonge way or twey
Than thinkith me anon that your figure
Suppliant before me ſtante clad in aſure,
Redy efte to profre a newe aſſure
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to prey. 332

The longè night this wondir ſyght I drie,
That on the day for ſoche affray I dye;
And of al this right naught iwys ye retche;
Ne nevirmore myne eyin two ben drye;
And to your routhe and to your trouthe I crye,
But wel away! to ferre ben they to fetche:
Thus holdith me my Deſtiny a wretche;
But me to rede out of this drede or gye
Ne may my wit (ſo weke is it) not ſtretche. 341

Than ende I thus, ſithe I may do no more,
I yeve it up for nowe and evirmore,
For I ſhall nevir efte putten in balaunce
My ſikirneſs, ne lerne of love the lore,
But as the ſwan, I have herde ſay ful yore,
Ayenſt his deth wol ſing in his penance,
So ſinge I here the deſtinie and chaunce

Howe that Arcite Annelida ſo ſore
Hath thrillid with the poynt of remembraunce.

When that Annelida, this woful Quene,
Hath of her hande ywrittin in this wiſe,
With face all ded, betwixin pale and grene,
She fel a ſwoune, and ſithe ſhe gan to riſe,
And unto Mars avowith ſacrifiſe
Within the temple, with a ſorowfull chere,
That ſhapin was as ye may plainly here.

Explicit.

THE COMPLAINT

OF THE BLACKE KNIGHT.

The heavy Complaint of a knight for that he can not win his lady's grace.

In Maie, when Flora the freſhe luſtie quene
The ſoile hath cladde in grene, and red, and whight,
And Phœbus gan to ſhede his ſtremis ſhene
Amidde the Bulle with al the bemis bright,
And Lucifer to chace awaie the night,
Ayen the morowe our orizont hath take
To bid all lovirs out of ſlepe awake,

And hertis hevie for to recomforte
From drerihed of hevie night'is ſorowe,
Nature bad 'hem riſe, and 'hem diſporte
Ayen' the godelie and the glad greie morowe,
And Hope alſo, with Sainct Ihon to borowe,
Bad in deſpite of daungir and diſpaire
For to takin the wholſome luſtie aire;

And with a ſigh I gan for to abreide
Out of my ſlombre', and ſodainly up ſterte,
As he (alas) that nigh for ſorowe deide,
My ſikèneſſe ſate aye ſo nie my herte,
But for to findin ſoccour of my ſmerte,
Or at the leſt ſome releſe of my paine,
That me ſo ſore yhalte in every veine.

I roſe anone, and thought I wouldè gone
Into the wodde to here the birdis ſyng
When that the miſtie vapour was agone,
And cleare and faire ywas the morownyng,
The dewe alſo like ſilvir in ſhinyng
Upon the levis, as any baume ſwete,
Till firie Titan with his perſaunt hete

Had dryid up the luſtie licour newe
Upon the herbis in the grenè mede,
And that the floures of many divers hewe
Upon ther ſtalkis gonin for to ſprede,
And for to ſplaie out ther levis in brede
Again the ſonne, golde burnid in his ſpere,
That doune to 'hem ycaſt his bemis clere.

And by a rivir forthe I gan coſtie
Of watir clere as birell or criſtall,
Till at the laſt I founde a little weie
Toward a parke, encloſid with a wall,
In compace rounde, and by a gatè ſmall;
Who ſo that would he frelie mightin gone
Into this parke, ywallid with grene ſtone:

And in I went to here the birdis ſong,
Which on the braunchis both in plain and vale
So loude yſang that all the wode yrong
Like as it ſhould ſhivir in pecis ſmale,
And as methoughtin that the nightingale
With ſo great might her voice began out wreſt
Right as her harte for love would all to breſt.

The ſoile was plain and ſmoth, and wondir ſoft,
All overſprad with tapettes that Nature
Had made her ſelf, covirid eke aloft
With bowis grene, the flouris for to cure,
That in ther beautie thei maie long endure
From all aſſaute of Phœbus fervent fere,
Whiche in his ſpheré ſo hotte yſhone and clere.

The aire attempre, and the ſmothè winde
Of Zephyrus emong the bloſomes white
So wholſome was and nouriſhing by kinde,
That ſmale buddis and round bloſomis lite
In maner gan of her brethe to delite,
To yeve us hope that there fruict ſhall ytake
Ayeniſt autumpne redy for to ſhake.

I ſawe the Daphne cloſid undir rinde,
With the grene laurir and the wholſome pine,
The Mirre alſo, that wepith ever' of kinde,
The cedris hie, as upright as a line,
The filbert eke, that lowe doith encline
Her bowis grene unto the yerth adoun
Unto her knight callid Demophoon.

There ſawe I growing eke the freſhe hauthorne
In white motley, that ſo ſote doeth yſmell,
Aſhe, firre, and oke, with many a yong acorn,
And many a tre mo then I can tell,
And me beforne I ſawe a little well,
That had his courſe, as I could wele beholde,
Undir an hill, with quicke ſtremis and colde, 77

The gravill gold, the watir pure as glaſſe,
The bankis rounde the well invironing,
And ſoft as velvet was the yongè graſſe
That thereupon luſtilie came ſpringyng,
The ſute of trees aboutin compaſſyng
Ther ſhadowe caſt, cloſyng the well arounde,
And all the herbis growyng on the grounde. 84

The water was ſo wholſome and ſo vertuous,
Through might of herbis growyng it beſide,
Not like to the welle where as Narciſſus
Iſlain was through the vengeaunce of Cupide,
Where ſo wondir covertly he did hide
The grain of deth upon eche fatal brinke
That deth mote folowe who that ever drinke; 91

Ne like unto the pitte of the Pegace
Undir Parnaſſus, where poëtis ſlept,
Nor like to the welle of pure chaſtitè
Which that Diana with her nymphis kept,
When ſhe nakid into the watir lepte,
That ſlowe Actæon with her handis fell,
Onily for he came ſo nigh the well: 98

But this welle which that I now here reherſe
So wholſome was that it wouldin aſwage
Wightes bollin hertis, and the venim perce
Of Penſifehed, withall the cruill rage,
And ovir more refreſhin the viſage
Of them that were in any werineſſe
Of grete labour, or fallin in diſtreſſe. 105

And I that had through daungir and diſdain
So drie a thurſt, thought that I would aſſaie
To taſtin a draught of this welle or twain,
My bittir langour if it might alaie,
And on the banke anone me doune I laie,
And with mine hed unto the welle I raught,
And of the watir dranke I a gode draught, 112

Whereof me thought I was refreſhid wele
Of the brennyng that ſate ſo nigh my herte,
That verily anone I gan to fele
An hugè parte releſid of my ſmerte,
And therewithall anone up I aſterte,
And thought that I would walkin and ſe more
Forthe in the parke and in the holtis hore. 119

And thorough a launde as I yede apace,
And gan aboutin faſt for to beholde,
I founde anone a delectable place
That was beſet with treis young and olde,
Whoſe namis here for me ſhall not be tolde,
Amidde of whiche there ſtode an herbir grene
That benchid was with colours new and clene. 126

This herbir was all full of flouris gende,
Into the whiche as I beholde began,
Betwixt an hulſere and a wodè bende,
As I was ware, I ſawe where laie a man
In blacke, and of white colour pale and wan,
And wondir dedly alſo of his hewe,
Of hurtis grene and freſhè woundis newe,

And ovirmore diſtrainid with ſickneſſe
Beſide all this he was full grevouſlie,
For upon hym he had an hote acceſſe
That daie by daie hym ſhoke full pitouſlie,
So that for conſtraint of his maladie
And hertely wo, thus lying all alone,
It was a deth for one to here hym grone.

Whereof aſtoined, my fote I gan withdrawe,
Full gretly wondiring what it might be
That he ſo laye and haddin no felawe,
Ne that I coude no wight with him yſe,
Wherof I had grete routhe and eke pite,
And gan anone, ſo ſoftely as I coude,
Amonge the buſhis prively me to ſhroude,

If that I myght in any wiſe aſpie
What was the cauſe of this his dedly wo,
Or why that he ſo petouſly gan crie
On his fortune, and on his ure alſo;
With al my myght I layid an ere to
Evèry worde, to marke wel what he ſaide
Out of his ſwough anon as he abraide.

But firſt, if I ſhulde makin mencion
Of his perſone, and plainly him diſcrive,
He was in ſothe, without excepcion,
To ſpeke of manhode, one the beſt on live,
There may no man ayen the trouth yſtrive,
For of his time and of his age alſo
He provid was there men ſhuld have ado. 161

One of the beſt therto of brede and length,
So wel ymade by gode proporcion,
If he had be in his delivir ſtrength,
But thought and ſickneſſe were occaſyon
That he thus lay in lamentacyon
Grouffe on the grounde, in place ſo deſolate,
Sole by him ſelf, awhapid and amate. 168

And for me ſemith that it is fitting
His wordis al to put in remembraunce,
To me that herdin all his complaining,
And al the grounde of this his woful chaunce,
If there withall I maye you do pleſaunce,
I wol to you ſo as I can anone,
Lyke as he ſaide, reherce everichone. 175

But who ſhal helpin me nowe to complaine,
Or who ſhal nowe my ſtilè gie or lede?
O Niobe! let nowe thy teris rayne
Into my penne, and helpe me eke in nede
Thou woful Myre! that feliſt mine hert blede
Of pitous ſorowe, and myn hande eke quake,
Whan that I writin for this mann'is ſake; 182

For unto wo accordith complaining,
And doleful cherè unto hevineſſe,
To ſorowe alſo ſighing and weping,
And pitous mourning unto drerineſſe;
And whoſo that ſhall writin of diſtreſſe
In party nedith to knowe felingly
The cauſe and rote of al ſoche malady. 189

But I, alas! that am of witte but dul,
And that have no knowing of ſoche matere,
For to diſcrive and writin at the ful
The woful Complainte which that ye ſhal here,
But evin like as doth a ſkrivinere,
That can no more tell what that he ſhal write
But as his maiſtir beſide dothe endite; 196

Ryght ſo fare I, that of no ſentèment
Can ſayin right naught in concluſioun,
But as I herde whan that I was preſent
This man complainin with a pitous ſoun,
For even like without addicioun
Or diſencreſe eythir of more or leſſe
For to reherſe anone I wol me dreſſe. 203

And if that any nowe be in this place
That felith in love breninge or fervence,
Or hindirid were to his ladie's grace
With falſè tongis, that with peſtilence
Sle trewè men, that nevir did offence
In worde nor dede, ne yet in ther entent,
If any ſoche there be here nowe preſent 210

Let him of routhe lay him to audience
With doleful chere and ſobre countinaunce,
To herin this man by ful hye ſentence
Hys mortal wo and his dire perturbaunce
Complaining, and nowe lying in a traunce
With lokis upcaſt and with ruful chere,
Th' effecte of which was as ye now ſhal here. 217

The thought oppreſſed with inward ſighis ſore,
The painful lyfe, the body languiſhing,
The woful goſt, the hertè rent and tore,
The pitous chere, all pale in complaining
The dedly face, like aſhis in ſhining,
The ſalte teris that from min eyin fall,
Percel declare grounde of my painis al. 224

Whoſe herte is grounde to blede in hevineſſe
The thought receite of wó and of complainte,
The breſt is cheſt of dole and drerineſſe,
The body eke ſo feble and ſo fainte,
With hote and colde mine axis is ſo mainte,
That nowe I chivir for defaute of hete,
And hote as glede nowe ſodainly I ſwete; 231

Nowe hote as fire, nowe cold as aſhis ded,
Now hote for colde, now cold for hete again,
Now cold as yſe, and now as colis red
For hete I brenne; and thus betwixin twaine
I poſſid am and al forcaſte in paine,
So that my hete full plainly as I fele
Of grevous colde is cauſe every dele. 238

This is the colde of inward hie diſdaine,
Colde of deſpite, and colde of cruil hate,
This is the colde that doth his beſy payne
Ayeniſt trouthe to fight and to debate,
This is the colde that doth the fyre abate
Of trewe mening; alas the hardè while!
This is the coldè that wol me begile: 245

For er the bettir that in trouth I mente
With al my myght her fathfully to ſerve,
With hert and al to be right diligent,
The leſſè thanke, alas! I can deſerve;
Thus for my trouthè Daungir doth me ſterve,
For one that ſhuld my deth of mercy let
Hath made Deſpite anew his ſwerde to whet 252

Againſt me, and his arowis to fyle,
To take vengeaunce of wilful cruilte,
And tongis falſe thorough ther ſleightly wyle
Han gone a werre, that wil not ſtintid be,
And falſe Envie, with Wrathe and Envyte,
Have conſpirid againſt al right and lawe
Of ther malyce that Trouth ſhal be yſlawe. 259

And Malèbouche gan firſt the talè tel,
To ſclaundir Trouth of indignacion,
And Falſe Reporte ſo laud yrange the bel
That Miſbyleſe and Falſe Suſpection
Have Trouthe ybrought to his dampnacion,
So that, alas! wrongfully he dyith,
And Falſeneſſe nowe his place occupyith, 266

And entirid is into Trouth'is londe,
And hath thereof the ful poſſeſſion.
O rightful God! that firſt the trouthè fonde,
Howe maie thou ſuffre ſoche oppreſſyon,
That Falſhed ſhulde have juriſdiction
In Troth'is right to ſle him giltiles!
In his fraunchiſe he may not live in pees.

Falſly accuſed, and of his fone forjuged,
Withoutin anſwere, while he was abſent,
He damnid was, and maie not be excuſed,
For Cruilte yſate in judgèment
Of Haſtineſſe without adviſèment,
And badde Diſdaine do execute anone
His judgèment in preſence of his fone.

Attourney there maye none admittid ben
To excuſe Trouthè, ne a worde to ſpeke;
To faith or othe the judge ne lyſte not ſene;
There ne is no gaine but he will be wreke.
O Lorde of Trouthe! to the I cal and clepe,
Howe may thou ſein thus in thy preſence
Withoutin mercy murdrid Innocence!

Nowe God, that art of trouthè ſovèraine,
And ſeiſt how I lie for trouthè bounde,
So ſore yknitte in lov'is fyrie chaine,
Even at the deth, through gyrte with many'a wounde,
That lykily are nevir for to ſounde,
And for my trouthe am dampnid to the deth,
And not abyde, but drawe along the breth,

Consídre' and se in thine eternal right
Howe that min herte professid whilom was
For to be trewè with al my ful myght
Onily to one, the whiche nowe, alas!
Of volunte without any trespas
Myne accusours hath takin unto grace,
And cherishith 'hem my deth to purchace.

What menith this? what is this wondir ure
Of purveiaunce, yf so I shal it cal,
Of god of Love, that false 'hem so assure,
And trewe, alas! downe of the whele ben fal!
And yet in sothe this is the worst of al,
That falshed wrongfully' of troth hath the name,
And trouth ayenward of falshed the blame.

This blindè chaunce, this stormy avinture,
In love hath mostely his experience,
For who that doth with trouthè most his cure
Shal for his mede yfindin moste offence
That servith Love with al his diligence,
For who can fainin undir lowlyhede
Ne failith not to findin grace and spede:

For I lovid one ful longe sythe agone
With all mine herte, and body, and ful might,
And to be ded my hertè can not gone
From his beheste, but hold that he hath hyght;
Though I be banishid out of her syght,
And by her mouth dampnid that I shall dey,
To my beheste yet I will er obey:

For evir ſithins that the worlde began,
Who ſo lyſte lokin and in ſtory rede,
He ſhal aye findin that the trewè man
Was put abacke there where as the falſhede
Yfurthered was; for Love takith none hede
To ſle the trew, and hath of 'hem no charge,
Where as the falſe gothe frely at ther large.

I take recorde of true Palamedes,
The giltleſs man, the noble worthy knight,
That evir lovid and had no reles,
Notwithſtanding his manhode and his might,
Yet Love unto him dyd ful gret unright,
For aye the bet he dyd in chivalrye
The more he ſtill was hindrid by envye;

And aye the bett he did in every place,
Thorough his knighthode and his buſy paine,
The ferdir was he from his ladye's grace,
For to her mercy might he ner attaine,
And to his deth he coude it not refraine
For no daungere, but aye obey and ſerve
As he beſte coude, plainly tyl that he ſterve.

What was the ſyne alſo of Hercules
For al his conqueſt and his worthineſſe,
That was of manly ſtrength alone pereles?
For lyke as bokis of him liſte expreſſe
He ſet pillers thorough his hye proweſſe
Away at Gades, for to ſygniſie
That no man might him paſſe in chivalrye;

The whichè pilliris ferre beyonde Inde
Beſet of golde for a rememberaunce,
And for al that yet was he ſet behinde
With 'hem that love lyſte ſebly to avaunce;
For him, alas! ſet laſt upon a daunce
Againiſt whom there helpè may no ſtrife,
And ſo for al his trouth he loſte his life.

Phœbus alſo, for all his pleſaunt lyght,
Whan that he wonid here in yerthe belowe,
Unto the verry herte with Venus ſight
Ywoundid was thorough Cupidis bowe,
And yet his lady lyſt him not to knowe;
Though for the love of her his herte dyd blede
She let him go, and toke of him no hede.

What ſhal I ſayin of yonge Pyramus,
Of trewe Triſtram, for al his hye renowne,
Of Achilles or of Antonius,
Of Arcytè, or of him Palomowne?
What was the ende of all ther paſſiowne
But aftir ſorowe deth and than ther grave?
Lo, here the guerdon that theſe lovirs have!

But falſè Jaſon with his doubleneſſe,
That was untrewe at Colchos to Medee,
And Theſeus, rote of unkindèneſſe,
And with theſe two alſo the falſe Enee,
Lo! thus the falſe evir in one degre
Haddin in love ther luſt and al ther wil,
And ſave falſhode there was none othir ſkil.

Of Thebis city eke the falſe Arcite,
And falſir Demophon eke for his ſlouthe,
They had ther luſt and al that myght delite
For al ther falſhode and ther gret untrouthe:
Thus evir Love, alas! and that is routhe,
His falſe liegis forthirith what he may,
And ſleeth the trewe ungodely day by day: 385

For trewe Adonis was ſlayne with the bore
Amidde the foreſt in the grenè ſhade,
For Venus love he feltin al the ſore,
But Vulcanus with her no mercy made,
The foulè chorle had many nightis glade,
Where Mars Armipotent, her knight and man,
To fyndin mercy comforte none he can. 392

Alſo the yongè freſhe Hippomenes,
So luſtly fre he was of his corage
That for to ſerve with al his hert he ches
Atalanta, ſo faire of her viſage,
But Love, alas! quite him ſo ill his wage,
With cruil daungir plainly at the laſte,
That with the dethè guerdonleſſe he paſte. 399

Lo here, alas! the fine of Love's ſervice!
Lo howe that Love can his ſervauntis quite!
Lo how he can his faithful men diſpiſe,
To ſle the trewe men and falſe to reſpite!
Lo howe he dothe the ſwerde of ſorowe byte
In hert'is ſoche as moſte his luſte obey,
To ſave the falſe and do the trewe to dey! 406

For faith, nor othe, nor worde, ne aſſuraunce,
Trewe mening, nor awaite, nor buſyneſſe,
Neithir ſtil porte ne faithful attendaunce,
Manhode, ne might in armis, worthineſſe,
Nor purſute of worſhip nor hie proweſſe,
Nor in ſtraunge landis riding ne travaile,
Ful lytil or nought in love dothe availe. 413

Peril of dethe neithir in ſe ne lande,
Hungir ne thurſt, ſorowe ne ſykèneſſe,
Ne gret empriſis for to take on hande,
Sheding of blode, ne manful hardineſſe,
Ne ofte wounding at ſautis by diſtreſſe,
Nor in parting of life, nor deth alſo,
Al is for nought; Love taketh no hedè therto. 420

But leſingoures with ther baſe flattirie,
Through ther falſhede, and with ther doubleneſſe,
With talis newe, and many fainid lie,
By falſe ſemblaunt and counterfeit humbleſſe,
Undir colour depainte with ſtedſaſtneſſe,
With fraude covered under a pitous face,
Acceptid be nowe rathiſt unto grace, 427

And can themſelvin nowe beſt magnifie
With fainid porte and ther preſumpcion;
They hauncin ther cauſe with falſe ſurquidrie,
Undir menyng of double entencion,
To thinkin one in ther opinion,
And ſaye' anothir to ſet them ſelf alofte,
And hindir trouthe, as it is ſene ful ofte. 434

The whichè thinge I bye nowe al to dere,
Thankid be Venus and the god Cupide,
As it is sene by mine oppressid chere,
And by his arowes that stycken in my side,
That save my deth I nothinge elles abide
Fro day to day, alas the hardè while!
Whenevir his darte that hym lyst to file, 441

My woful hertè for to rive atwo,
For faute of mercy and lack of pite
Of her that causith al my paine and wo,
And lyste not onis of grace for to se
Unto my trothe thorough her cruelte;
And most of al for this I me complaine,
That she hath joy to laughin at my paine, 448

And wilfully she hath my deth ysworne
Al giltilesse, and wote no causè why,
Save for the trouthè that I had aforne
To her alone to servin faithfully.
O god of Love! all unto the I crye,
And to thy blynde and double deïte
Of this my gret wronge I complainè me, 455

And to thy stormy wilful variaunce,
Iment with chaunge and gret unstablenesse,
Now up, now doune, so renning is thy chaunce,
That the to trust may be no sikirnesse,
I wite it nothinge but thy doublenesse;
And who that is an archir and is blende
Markith nothinge, but shotith ay by wende; 462

And for that he hath no diſcrecion
Without adviſe he let his arowe go;
For lacke of ſight and alſo of reſon,
In his ſhoting it happith oftin ſo
To hurte his frendiſt rathir than his ſo:
So doith this blind god with his ſharpe ſlone,
The trew he ſleeth and lettith the falſe gone.

And of his wounding this is worſt of al,
Whan he hurt doith to ſo cruil wretche,
And makith the ſycke for to crie and cal
Unto his very ſoe to be his leche;
And harde it is, ſothe, for a man to ſeche,
Upon the point of deth in jeoperdye,
Unto his ſoe to findin remedie.

Right thus farith it nowe evin by me,
That to my ſoe that gave my herte a wounde
Mote aſkin grace, and mercy, and pite,
And namily there where none may be founde,
For nowe my ſore my lechè wil confounde,
And god of Kinde ſo ill hath ſet mine ure
My lyv'is ſoe to have my wounde in cure.

Alas the whilè nowe that I was borne,
Or that I evir ſawe the brightè ſonne!
For nowe I ſe plaine that ful longe aforne
Or I was borne my deſtiny was ſponne
By the Siſterne, to ſle me yf they conne,
For they my deth had ſhopin or my ſherte,
Onely for trouth I may it not aſterte.

The mighty goddesse also of Nature,
That undir God hath the whole govirnaunce
Of worldely thinges committid to her cure,
Dispofid have through her wise purveiaunce
To give my lady so moche suffisaunce
Of al vertues, and therwithal purvyde
To murdre Trouth hath take Daungir to gide: 497

For bounte, beaute, shape, and semelihede,
For prudence, wit, and passingly fairenesse,
For benigne porte, glad chere, with lowlyhede,
Of womanhede right plenteous largenesse,
Dame Nature dyd in her fully empresse
Whan she her wrought, and althir last Disdaine
To hindir Trouthe she made her chambirlaine; 504

Whan Mistrust eke and False Suspeccion,
With Misbeleve, she madin for to be
Chefe of counsaile, to this conclusion,
For to exilin Trouthe and eke Pite,
Out of her courte to makin Mercy fle,
So that Dispite now holdith forthe her reine
Through hasty bileve of tales that men feine. 511

And thus I' am, only for my trouth, alas!
Murdrid and slayn with wordis sharpe and kene,
Although gyltlesse God wote of al trespas,
And lye and blede upon this coldè grene.
Nowe mercy, swete! mercy, my liv'is quene!
And to your grace of mercye yet I preye
In your service that your true man may deye. 518

But if ſo be that I ſhal die algate,
And that I ſhal none othir mercy have,
Yet of my deth let this yben the date,
That by your wil I was brought to my grave,
Or haſtily, if that you lyſte me ſave,
My ſharpe woundis, that akin ſo and blede,
Of mercy charme and alſo' of womanhede: 525

For othir charme plainly ne is there none
But onely mercy to helpe in this caſe,
For though my woundis blede evir in one
My lyfe, my deth, yſtandith in your grace;
And though my gilte ybe nothinge, alas!
I aſke mercy in all my beſt entente,
Redy to dyin if that ye aſſente: 532

For there againiſt ſhal I nevir ſtrive
In worde ne werkè, plainly I ne may,
For levir I have then to be alyve
To dye ſothly, and it be to her paye,
Ye, though it ſhuldè be this ſamè day,
Or whan that evir her lyſte to deviſe;
Suffiſith me to die in your ſerviſe. 539

Thou, God! that knoweſt the thought of every wight
Right as it is, in every thing maiſt ſe,
Yet er I dyin with al my ful myght
Lowly I pray to grauntin unto me
That ye, lady godely, faire, freſhe, and fre!
Which onely ſle me for defaute of routhe,
Or that I dyin ye may knowe my trouthe: 546

For that in ſothe inow ſuffiſith me
And ſhe it knowe in every circumſtaunce,
And aftir I am wel apaide that ſhe,
If that her lyſt of deth to do vengeaunce,
Unto me that am undir her lygeaunce;
It ſit me not her dome to diſobeye,
But at her luſte fulle wilfully to deye.

Withoutin grutchinge or rebellion
In wil or wordis wholy I aſſente,
Or any manir contradiction,
Fully to be at her commaundèment;
And if I dyin, in my teſtament
My herte I ſende and my ſpirite alſo,
What ſo evir ſhe lyſte with 'hem to do.

And aldir laſt unto her womanhede
And to her mercy me I recommaunde,
That lye nowe here betwixin hope and drede,
Abidinge plainly what ſhe liſt commaunde,
For uttirly this ne is no demaunde;
Welcome to me whilis me laſtith breth,
Ryght at her choiſe, where it be lyfe or deth.

And in this matir more what might I faine,
Sithe in her hand and in her wil is al,
Bothe lyfe and deth, my joye and al my peine?
And, finally, my heſte holdin I ſhall
Tyl my ſpirite by deſtinye fatal,
Whan that her lyſtith fro my body wende,
Have here my trouth; and thus I make an ende.

And with that worde he gan to ſighe as ſore,
Like as his hert yrivin would atwaine,
And helde his pece, and ſpake no wordè more;
But for to ſe his wo and mortal paine
The teris gonin fro mine eyin raine
Ful piteouſly, for very inwarde rothe
That I him ſawè ſo long wiſhyng for troth.

And al this while my ſelfe I keptè cloſe
Amonge the bowis, and my ſelfe gonne hide,
Tyl at the laſt the woful man aroſe,
And to a lodge ywent there cloſe beſide,
Where al the May his cuſtome was t'abyde,
Sole to complainin of his painis kene
From yere to yere undir the bowis grene.

And for bycauſe that it drewe to the night,
And that the ſonnè his arke diurnal
Ypaſſid was, ſo that his perſaunt lyght,
His brightè bemis and his ſtremis al,
Were in the wavis of the watir fal
Undir the bordure of our ocean,
His chare of golde his courſe ſo ſwiftly ran;

And while the twilight and the rowis rede
Of Phœbus light were deaurat alite
A penne I toke, and gan me faſt to ſpede
The woful plaintis of this man to write
All worde by worde right as he dyd endite;
Like as I herde and coude him tho reporte
I have here ſet, your hertis to diſporte.

If ought be miſſe laye alle the wite on me,
For I am worthy for to bere the blame;
If any thinge amyſſe reportid be
To make this ditte for to ſemè lame,
Through myne unconning for to ſain the ſame
Like as this man his Complaint dyd expreſſe,
I aſke you mercy and forgivèneſſe. 609

And as I wrote me thought I ſawe aferre,
Aferre in the weſt, luſtily appere
Eſperus, the ſo bright and godely ſterre,
So glade, ſo faire, ſo perſaunte, eke of chere,
I menè Venus, with her bemis clere,
That hevy hertis only to releve
Is wonte of cuſtome for to ſhewe at eve; 616

And I as faſt fel adowne on my kne,
And evin thus to her gan I to prey;
O lady Venus, ſo feire on to ſe!
Let not this ſothfaſt man for his trouthe deye,
For that joy which thou haddiſt whan thou leye
With Mars thy knight when Vulcanus yfonde,
And with a chaine unviſible you bonde 623

Togidir bothè tway, in the ſame whyle
That al the courte above celeſtial
At your ſhamè began to laughe and ſmyle:
Ah! fairiſt lady! willy fonde at al,
Comforte to careful goddis immortal
Be helping nowe, and do thy diligence
To let the ſtremis of thine influence 630

Diſcendin downe in forthering of the trouth,
Namely of 'hem that lye in ſorowe bounde;
Shew now thy might, and on ther wo have reuth
Er that falſe Daungir ſle 'hem and confounde;
And ſpecial let thy might in this be founde
For to help and ſocour what that thou may
The trewè man that in the herbir lay, 637

And al that trewe are forthir for his ſake,
O gladè ſterre! o lady Venus myne!
And cauſe his lady him to grace to take;
Her hert of ſtele to mercy ſo enclíne,
Er that thy bemis go up to declyne,
And er that thou nowe go fro us adowne,
For that love which thou haddiſt to Adowne. 644

And whan that ſhe was gone unto her reſt
I roſe anone, and home to bed ywente,
For wery' I was, me thought it for the beſt,
Deſiring thus in al my beſt entente
That al trewe men that be with daungir ſhente
With mercy may, in releſe of ther paine,
Recurid be er Maye come eſte againe. 651

And for that I ne may no lengir wake
Farewel, ye loviris al that be trewe,
Praying to God, and thus my leve I take,
That er the ſonne to morowe be ryſen newe,
And er he have ayen his roſin hewe,
That eche of you may havin ſoche a grace
His owne lady in armis to embrace; 658

I mene thus only, in al honeſte,
Withoutin more, ye may togidir ſpeke
What ſo ye lyſtin at gode liberte,
That eche may to othir ther herte ybreke,
On Jelouſie only to be awreke,
That hath ſo long of malice and envy
Ywerrid Trouthè with his tiranny. 665

L'ENVOYE.

Princeſſe! pleſith it your benignite
This lityl dyte for to have in minde
Of your womanhede, alſo for to ſe
That your trew man may of you mercy find
And pite eke, that longe hath be behinde;
Let him againe be provokid to grace,
For by my trouthe it is againſt alle kinde
That falſe Daungere ſhould occupye his place. 673

Go, litil quaire, unto my liv'is quene,
And to my very hert'is ſovèraine,
And be right glad for that ſhe ſhal the ſene;
Soche is thy grace: but I, alas! in paine
Am leſte behinde, and n'ot to whom to plaine,
For Mercy, Ruthe, and Grace, and eke Pyte,
Exilid be, that I may not attaine
Recure to finde of mine adverſite. 681

Explicit.

COMPLAINT OF MARS & VENUS.

Gladith ye lovirs in the morowe graie;
Lo Venus rissen emong yon rowis rede!
And flouris freshè honour ye this daie,
For when the sonne uprist then would thei sprede;
But ye lovirs that lie in any drede
Flyith, leste wickid tonguis you aspie;
Lo, yonde the sonne, the candle' of Jelousie! 7

With teris blewe and with a woundid hert
Taketh your leve, and with Sainct Ihon to borowe
Apesith somwhat of your painis smert,
Time comith eft that cessin shall your sorow;
The glad night is worthe an hevie morowe.
Sainct Valentine, a foule thus herde I sing
Upon thy daie or sonnè gan up spring: 14

Yet sang this foule; I rede you all awake,
And ye that have not chosen in humble wise,
Without repentyng, chesith now your make,
Yet at the lest renoveleth your service,
And ye that have full chosen, as I devise,
Confermith it perpetually to dure,
And pacientlie takith your avinture. 21

And for the worship of this highè feste
Yet woll I in my bridd'is wise ysyng
The sentence of the Complaint at the leste
That wofull Mars made at the departyng
Fro freshe Venus in a morownyng,
When Phœbus with his firie torchis rede
Ransaked hath every lovir in his drede. 28

Whilome the thre hevenis lorde above,
As well by hevenliche revolucion
As by deſerte, hath wonne Venus his love,
And ſhe hath take hym in ſubjeccion,
And as a maiſtreſſe taught him his leſſon,
Commaundyng hym nevir in her ſervice
He were ſo bolde no lovir to diſpiſe:

For ſhe forbade hym jelouſie at all,
And cruiltie, and boſte, and tirannie;
She made him at her luſte ſo humble' and thrall,
That when ſhe dained to caſt on him her eye
He toke in pacience to live or die;
And thus ſhe bridlith him in her manere
With nothing but with ſcorning of her chere.

Who reignith nowe in bliſſe but faire Venus,
That hath this worthi knight in govirnaunce?
Who ſingith nowe but Mars, that ſervith thus
The fayre Venus, the cauſir of pleſaunce?
He bint him to perpetuel obeiſſaunce,
And ſhe binte her to lovin him for ever,
But ſo be that his treſpace it diſcever.

Thus be they knitte, and reignin as in heven,
By loking moſt, as it fel on a tide,
That by ther bothe aſſent was ſet a ſteven
That Mars ſhall entre' as faſt as he may glyde
Into her nextè palays to abyde,
Walking his courſe til ſhe had him ytake,
And he prayed her to haſte her for his ſake.

Than ſaide he thus; Myne hert'is lady ſwete!
Ye knowin wel my myſchefe in that place,
For ſikirly tyl that I with you mete
My lyfe ſtante there in avinture and grace,
But whan I ſe the beaute of your face
There is no drede of deth may do me ſmerte,
For al your luſte is eſe unto mine herte.

She hath ſo grete compaſſion of her knight,
That dwellith in ſolitude til ſhe come,
For it ſtode ſo that ylkè time no wight
Counſailid him, ne ſaide to him welcome,
That nigh her wit for ſorowe was oercome,
Wherfore ſhe ſpedd her as faſt in her way
Almoſte in one daye as he did in tway.

The gret joye that ywas betwixe 'hem two
Whan they be mette there maye no tongè tel,
There is no more but unto bedde they go,
And thus in joye and bliſſe I lette 'hem dwel;
This worthy Mars, that is of knighthode wel,
The floure of fairneſſe happith in his armes,
And Venus kyſſith Mars the god of Armes.

Sojournid hath this Mars, of which I rede,
In chambre' amydde the palais privily
A certaine time, til that him fel a drede
Through Phœbus, that was comin haſtily
Within the palais yatis ſturdily
With torch in honde, of which the ſtremis bright
On Venus chambre knockidin ful light.

The chambre there as laye this freſhè quene
Depaintid was with whitè bolis grete,
And by the light ſhe knew that ſhon ſo ſhene
That Phœbus came to bren 'hem with his hete;
This ſilly Venus, ny dreint in teres wete,
Enbraſith Mars, and ſaid, Alas I die!
The torch is come that all this worlde wol wrie. 91

Up ſterte tho Mars, him liſtid not to ſlepe
Whan he his lady herdin ſo complaine,
But for his nature was not for to wepe,
In ſtede of teris from his eyin twaine
The firie ſparclis ſprongin out for paine,
And hente his hauberke that lay him beſide;
Fly wold he nought, ne might him ſelfin hide. 98

He throwith on his helme of hugè weight,
And girt him with his ſwerde, and in his honde
His mighty ſpere, as he was wont to feight,
He ſhakith ſo that it almoſt to wonde;
Ful hevy was he to walken ovir londe;
He may not holde with Venus company,
But badde her flye, leſte Phœbus her eſpy. 105

O woful Mars, alas! what maiſt thou ſain?
That in the palais of thy diſturbaunce
Arte lefte behind in paril to be ſlaine,
And yet thereto is double thy penaunce,
For ſhe that hath thine hert in govirnaunce
Is paſſid halfe the ſtremis of thine eyen; 111
That you n'ere ſwiſt wel maiſt thou wepe and crien.

Nowe flyeth Venus into Ciclinius tour
With voidè corſe, for ferè of Phœbus light;
Alas! and there ne hath ſhe no ſocour,
For ſhe ne founde ne ſey no manir wight,
And eke as there ſhe had but litil might,
Wherfore her ſelvin for to hide and ſave
Within the gate ſhe fledde into a cave.

Darke was this cave, and ſmoking as the hel,
Nat but two paas within the yate it ſtode;
A naturel day in darke I let her dwel.
Now wol I ſpeke of Mars, furious and wode,
For ſorowe he wolde have ſeen his hert blode;
Sith that he might done her no companie
He ne rought not a mitè for to die.

So feble' he wext for hete and for his wo
That nigh he ſwelt; he might unneth endure;
He paſſith but a ſterre in dayis two;
But nertheles for al his hevy armure
He foloweth her that is his liv'is cure,
For whoſe departing he toke gretir yre
Than he did for his brenning in the fire.

Aftir he walkith ſoftily a paas,
Complaining that it pite was to here;
He ſaide, O lady bright, Venus! alas
That er ſo wide a compaṣ is my ſphere!
Alas, whan ſhal I mete you, hertè dere!
This twelve dayis of April I endure
Through jelous Phœbus this miſavinture.

Now God helpe ſely Venus all alone!
But as God wolde it happid for to be
That while that weping Venus made her mone
Ciclinius riding in his chyvaunche
Fro Venus, Valanus might this palais ſe,
And Venus he ſalvith and makith chere,
And her recevith as his frende ful dere. 147

Mars dwellith forth in his adverſite,
Complaining evir in her departing,
And what his complaint was remembrith me,
And therfore in this luſtie morowning,
As I beſt can, I wol it ſaine and ſing,
And aftir that I wol my leve ytake,
And God yeve every wight joy of his make! 154

THE COMPLAINT OF MARS.

The' ordir of Complaynt requireth ſkilfully
That if a wight ſhall plainin pitouſly
Ther mote be cauſe wherfore that men yplaine,
Or men may deme he playnith folily
And cauſèles: alas! that am not I,
Wherfore the grounde and cauſe of all my paine,
So as my troublid witte may it attaine,
I wol reherſe, not for to have redreſſe,
But to declare my grounde of hevineſſe. 9

The firſt time, alas! that I was ywrought,
And for certain effectis hidir brought
By him that lordith eche intelligence,
I yave my trewė ſervice and my thought
For evirmo, how dere I have it bought!
To her that is of ſo gret excellence
That what wight that ſhewith firſt her offence,
Whan ſhe is wrothe and taketh of him no cure,
He may not longe in joye of love endure.

This is no fainid matir that I tel;
My lady is the very ſours and wel
Of beaute, luſte, fredome, and gentilneſſe,
Of riche array howe dere ſo men it ſel,
Of al diſporte in whiche men frendly dwel,
Of love and play, and of benigne humbleſſe,
Of ſowne of inſtrumentes of al ſwetneſſe,
And thereto ſo wel fortuned and thewid
That through the world her godenes is ſhewid:

What wondir is than though that I beſette
My ſervice on ſoche one that may me knette
To wele or wo, ſithe it lithe in her might?
Therfore myne herte for er I to her hette,
Ne trewly for my deth ſhall I not lette
To ben her trewiſt ſervant and her knight;
I flattir nat, that may wete every wight,
For this day in her ſervice ſhal I dye;
But grace be I ſe her nevir with eye.

To whom ſhal I plainin of my diſtreſſe?
Who may me help, who may my hert redreſſe?
Shal I complaine unto my lady fre?
Nay, certis, for ſhe hath ſoche hevyneſſe
For fere and eke for wo, that as I geſſe
In litil time it would her bane ybe,
But were ſhe ſafe it were no force of me:
Alas that evir lovirs mote endure
For love ſo many per'ilous avinture!

For though ſo be that lovirs be as trewe
As any metal that is forgid newe,
In many' a caſe 'hem tidith oft ſorowe;
Somtime ther ladies wol nat on 'hem rewe,
Somtimis if that Jelouſy it knewe
They mightin lightly lay ther hed to borowe;
Somtime envious folke with tongis horowe
Depravin 'hem: alas! whom may they pleſe?
But he be falſe no lovir hath his eſe.

But what availith ſoch a long ſermoun
Of avinturis of love up and doun?
I wol retourne and ſpekin of my paine:
The point is this, of my diſtructioun
My right lady and my ſalvacioun
Is in affray, and n'ot to whom to plaine:
O hertè ſwete! o lady ſoverayne!
For your diſeſe I ought wel ſwoun and ſwelt,
Though I none othir harme ne drede yfelt.

To what ſine made the god that ſytte ſo hie
Beneth him othir love or companye,
And ſtrainith folke to love maugre ther hed?
And than ther joye for aught I can eſpie
Ne laſtith not the twinkeling of an eye,
And ſome have nevir joye til they be ded;
What menith this, what is this miſtihed?
Wherto conſtrainith he his folke ſo faſt
Thing to deſirin but it ſhould ylaſt?
And though he made a lovir love a thing,
And makith it ſeme ſtedfaſt and during,
Yet putteth he in it ſoche miſavinture
That reſt ne is there none in his yeving;
And that is wondir that ſo juſte a king
Ydothe ſoche hardneſſe unto his creture;
Thus whethir lovè breke or ellis dure
Algatis he that hath with love to done
Hath oftir wo than chaungid is the mone.
It ſemeth he hath to lovirs enmyte,
And lyke a fiſher, as men may al day ſe,
Baitith his anglehoke with ſome pleſaunce,
Til many' a fiſhe is wode to that he be
Ceſid therwith, and then at erſt hath he
Al his deſire, and therwithal miſchaunce,
And though the line ybreke he hath penaunce,
For with that hoke he woundid is ſo ſore
That he his wagis hath for evirmore.

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The broche of Thebis was of ſoche a kinde,
So ful of rubyes and of ſtones of Inde
That every wight that ſette on it an eye
He wende anone to worthe out of his mynde;
So ſore the beaute would his hert ybynde
Til it he had him thought he muſt ydie;
And when that it was his than ſhould he drie
Soche wo for drede aye while that he it had
That welnigh for the fere he ſhould be mad;

And whan it was fro his poſſeſſion
Than had he double wo and paſſion
That he ſo faire a jewil hath forgo;
But yet this broche, as in concluſion,
Was not the cauſe of his confuſion,
But he that wrought it enfortuned it ſo
That every wight that had it ſhould have wo,
And therfore in the worchir was the vice,
And in the coveitour, that was ſo nice.

So farith it by lovirs and by me,
For though my lady have ſo grete beaute
That I was mad to I had gette her grace
She was not cauſe of mine adverſite,
But he that wroughtin her, as mote I the,
That put ſo gret a beaute in her face
That made me coveitin and ſo purchace
Myne ownè deth; him wite I that I die,
And mine unwit that er I clambe ſo hie.

But to you hardy knightis of renowne,
Sithe that ye be of my devisyowne,
Al be' I not worthy to so gret a name,
Yet faine these clerkis I am your patrone,
Therfore ye ought have some compassione
Of my disese, and take it nat agame,
The proudist of you may be made ful tame,
Wherfore I pray you of your gentillesse
That ye complainin for mine hevinesse. 126

And ye, my ladyes, that ben trew and stable,
By way of kinde ye oughtin to ben able
To have pite of folke that ben in paine;
Nowe have ye cause to clothin you in sable;
Sith that your empères the honorable
Is desolate wel oughtin ye to plaine;
Nowe shoude your holy teris fal and raine:
Alas! your honour and your emperice
Nigh ded for drede ne can her not chevice. 135

Complainith eke ye lovirs al in fere
For her that with unfainid humble chere
Was evir redy to do you socour,
Complainith her that er hath be you dere,
Complainith beaute, fredome, and manère,
Complainith her that endith your labour,
Complainith thilke ensample' of al honour,
That nevir yet dyd ought but gentilnesse;
Kythith therfore in her some kindènesse. 144

THE COMPLAINT OF VENUS.

THERE n'ys ſo high comfort to my pleſaunce,
Whan that I am in any hevineſſe,
As for to have leyſir of remembraunce
Upon the manhode and the worthyneſſe,
Upon the trouthe and on the ſtedfaſtnes,
Of him whoſe I am al while I maye dure;
There ought to blamin me no creäture,
For every wight praiſith his gentilleſſe.

In him is bounte, wiſedome, govirnaunce,
Well more than any mann'is witte can geſſe,
For Grace hath wolde ſo ferforth him avaunce
That of knighthod he is parfite richeſſe,
Honour honourith him for his nobleſſe,
Therto ſo wel hath fourmid him Nature
That I am his for er I him enſure,
For every wight praiſith his gentilleſſe.

And natwithſtanding all his ſuffiſaunce
His gentil herte is of ſo gret humbleſſe
To me in worde, in werke, and in countenaunce,
And me to ſerve is al his beſineſſe,
That I am ſette in very ſykirneſſe;
Thus ought I to bliſſe wel mine avintour,
Sith that him liſte me ſervin and honour,
For every wight praiſith his gentilleſſe.

Nowe certis, Love, it is right covenable
That men ful dere abye thy noble thinges,
As wake abedde and faſtin at the table,

Weping to laugh, and ſinge in complainynges,
And downe to caſtin viſage and lokinges,
Oftin to chaunge viſage and countinaunce,
Playe in ſlepinge, and dremin at the daunce,
Al the revers of any gladde feling.

Jelouſy he hangid by a cable,
She wolde al knowin through her eſpiyng,
There dothe no wight nothing ſo reſonable
That al n'is harme in her ymagining;
Thus dere abought is Love in his yeving,
Whiche ofte he yevith without ordinaunce,
As ſorowe' ynough and litil of pleſaunce,
Al the revers of any glade feling.

A litil tyme his yeſt is agreable,
But ful accombèrous is the uſinge,
For ſubtil Jelouſy the diſcevable
Ful oftin tyme ycauſith diſtourbinge;
Thus ben we evir in drede and ſuffring:
In no certaine we languiſhen in penaunce,
And have wel ofte many an harde miſchaunce,
Al the revers of any gladde feling.

But certis, Love, I ſaye not in ſoche wiſe
That for to ſcape out of your lace I ment,
For I ſo longe have ben in your ſervice
That for to lete of wil I ner aſſent,
No force though jelouſye me doe tourment;
Suffiſith me to ſe him whan I may,
And therfore certis to mine ending day
To love him beſt ſhal me nevir repent.

And certis, Love, whan I me wel adviſe
Of any' eſtate that man may repreſent
Than have yé made me thorough your franchiſe
Cheſin the beſt that evir in erthe went;
Nowe love well, hert, and loke thou nevir ſtent,
And lette the jelous putte it in aſſaye
That for no paine ne wol I not ſay naye;
To love him beſt ſhal I nevir repent.

O herte! to the it ought ynoughe ſuffice
That Love ſo highe a grace hath to you ſent
To choſe the worthyiſt in allè wiſe,
And moſt agreable to mine entent;
Sekith no ferthir neithir way ne went,
Sith ye have ſuffiſaunce unto my paye:
Thus wol I ende this Complaint or this lay;
To love him beſt ſhal I nevir repent.

L'ENVOYE.

Princes, receveth this complaininge in gre,
Unto your excellent benignite
Directe aftir my litil ſuffiſaunce,
For elde, that in my ſpirite dullith me,
Hath of enditing al the ſubtilte
Welnigh berafte out of my remembraunce;
And eke to me it is a grete pęnaunce,
Sith rime in Engliſhe hath ſoche ſcarcite,
To' folowe worde by worde the curioſite
Of Granſon, flour of 'hem that make in Fraunce.

Explicit.

THE LAMENTACION

OF MARIE MAGDALEINE.

This treatiſe is taken out of St. Origen, wherein Mary Magdalen lamenteth the cruell death of her Saviour Chriſt.

PLONGID in the wawe of mortall diſtreſſe,
Alas for wo! to whom ſhal I complein?
Or who ſhall devoide this grete hevineſſe
Fro me', wofull Marie, wofull Magdalein!
My Lord is gon; alas! who wrought this tein?
This ſodain chaunce perſith my herte ſo depe
That nothing can I do but waile and wepe.

My Lorde is gone that here in grave was laied
Aftir his grete paſſion and deth cruell;
Alas! who hath hym thus again betraied?
Or what man here aboutin can me tell
Where he' is become the Prince of Iſraell,
Jeſus of Naz'areth, my ghoſtly ſuccour,
My parfite love, and hope of all honour!

What creture hath hym hennis caryid,
Or how might this ſo ſodainly befall?
I would I had here with him taryid,
And ſo ſhould I have had my purpoſe all:
I bought ointmentes full precious and roial,
Where with I hoped his corps to have anointed,
But he thus gone my minde is diſapoincted.

While I therefore advertise and beholde
This pitous chauncè here in my presence
Full little marvaile though my hert be colde,
Considiryng, lo! my Lord'is absence:
Alas that I so full of negligence
Should be foundin! bicause I come so late
All men maie saie I am infortunate.

Cause of my sorowe you maie undirstonde,
Quia tulerunt Dominum meum,
An othir is that I ne máie him fonde,
I wote nere *ubi posuerunt eum*;
Thus I muste bewaile *dolorem meum*
With hertie wepyng; I can no bet deserve
Till Deth approche my hertè for to kerve.

My herte opprest with sodain avinture
By fervent anguishe is bewrappid so
That long this life I ne maie not endure,
Soche is my pain, soch is my mortall wo;
Nevirthelesse to what parte shall I go
In hope to findin myne owne turtill true,
My liv'is joye, my soverain Lorde Jesu!

Sith all my joye, that I call his presence,
Is thus removed, now I am full of mone;
Alas the while I made no providence
For this mishap! wherefore I sigh and grone:
Succour to finde to what place might I gone!
Fain I would to some man my hertè breke;
I n'ot to whom I maie complain or speke.

Alone I ſtande full ſorie and full ſad,
Which hopid to have ſeen my Lorde and Kyng;
Small cauſe have I to be merie or glad
Remembryng this bittirfull departyng:
In this worlde ne is no creture livyng
That was to me ſo gode and gracious,
His love alſo then golde more precious.
Full ſore I ſigh without comfort again,
There is no cure to my ſalvacion,
His brenning love my hert ſo doth conſtrain,
Alas, here is a wofull permutacion!
Whereof I finde no joye nor conſolacion,
Therefore my pain all onely to confeſſe
With deth I fere woll ende my hevineſſe.
This wo and anguiſh is intollerable:
If I bide here life can I not ſuſtain,
If I go hence my paines be uncurable;
Where him to finde I knowe no place certain;
And thus I ne wote of theſe thingis twain
Whiche I maie take and which I maie refuſe;
My hert is wounded heron to thinke or muſe.
A while I ſhall ſtande in this morowning
In hope if any viſion would appere
That of my love might tell ſome gode tyding,
Whiche into joy might chaunge my wepyng chere;
I truſt in his grace and his mercie dere;
But at the leſt, though I therewith me kill,
I ſhall not ſpare to waile and wepe my fill.

And if that I die in soche avinture
I can no more but welcome as my chaunce;
My bones shall rest here in this sepulture;
My life, my deth, is at his ordinaunce;
It shal be tolde in lasting remembraunce:
Thus to departin is to me no shame,
And also thereof I 'am nothyng to blame.

Hope againft me so hath her course itake
That there is no more, but thus shall I die:
I se right well my Lorde hath me forsake,
But in my conceipt cause know I none why:
Although he be farre hence and nothing nye
Yet my wofull herte after hym doeth seke,
And causeth teres to ren doun by my cheke.

Thinking, alas! I have lost his presence,
Which in this worlde was all my sustinaunce;
I crie and call with hertie diligence,
But there is no wight givith attendaunce,
Me to certifie of myne enquiraunce,
Wherefore I will to all this world bewraie
How that my Lorde is slain and born awaie.

Though that I mourne it ne is no grete wonder,
Sithe he is all my joye in speciall;
And nowe I thinke we be so farre asonder
That hym to se I fere nevir I shall;
It helpith no more aftir hym to call,
Ne after hym to' enquire in any coste:
Alas! how is he thus ygone and lost?

The Jewis I thinke full of miſerie,
Yſet in malice by ther buſie cure
With force and might of gilefull trecherie
Hath entermined my Lord'is ſepulture,
And borne awaie that precious figure,
Levyng of it nothyng; if thei' have doen ſo
Marrid I am; alas, what ſhall I do!

With ther vengeaunce inſaciable
Now have thei hym giltleſs entretid ſo
That to reporte it is to lamentable,
Thei bete his bodie from toppe to the toe,
Nevir man was yborne that felte ſoche woe;
Thei woundid hym, alas! with all grevaunce,
The blode doun reilid in moſt habundaunce;

The blodie rowis ſtremed doun ovir all,
Thei him aſſailid ſo malicionſlie
With ther ſcourgis and ſtrokis beſtiall;
Thei ſparid not, but ſmote inceſſauntlie;
To ſatisfie ther malice thei were buſie:
Thei ſpit in his face, thei ſmote here and there;
He groned full ſore, and ſwete many a tere.

Thei crounid hym with thornis ſharpe and kene,
The vainis rent, the blode ran doun apace,
With blode ovircome were bothe his eyen,
And bolne with ſtrokis was his bleſſid face;
Thei hym entretid as men without grace,
Thei knelid to hym, and made many a ſcorne;
Like helhoundis they have hym all to torne:

Upon a mightie croſſe in length and brede
(Theſe turmentours ſhewid ther curſidneſſe)
Thei nailid hym without pitie or drede,
His precious blode braſt out in largèneſſe,
Thei ſtrained hym along as men mercileſſe;
The verie jointes all to myne apparence
Rived aſondir for ther grete violence.

All this I beholding with mine eyen twain
Stode there beſide with rufull attendaunce,
And er me thought he beyng in that pain
Lokid on me with dedly countinaunce,
As he' had ſaid in his ſpeciall remembraunce
Farwell Magdalen, depart muſt I nedes hens,
My herte is *tanquam cera liqueſcens*.

Whiche rufull ſight when that I gan beholde
Out of my witte I almoſte tho diſtraught,
I tare my here, my handis wrang and folde,
And of the ſight my hert dranke ſoche a draught
That many a fall ſwounyng there I caught;
I bruſed my bodie fallyng on the grounde,
Whereof I fele many a grevous wounde.

Then theſe wretchis, full of all frowardneſſe,
Gave hym to drinke eiſell temprid with gall;
Alas! that poiſon full of bittirneſſe
My lov'is chere cauſid then to appall,
And yet thereof might he not drinke at all,
But ſpake theſe wordis, as him thought it beſt,
Fathir of hevin! *conſummatum eſt*.

Then knelid I doune in pain'is outrage,
Clipping the crosse within myne armis twain,
His blode distillid doune on my visage,
My clothis eke the droppis did distain;
To have dyid for hym I would full fain,
But what shoulde it availe if I did so
Sith he' is *suspensus in patibulo?* 168

And thus my Lorde full dere was all disgised
With blode, and pain, and woundis many one,
His veinis brast, his jointis all to rived,
Partyng asondir the fleshe fro the bone;
But I sawe that he hing not there alone,
For *cum iniquis deputatus est*,
Not like a man but like a leprous best. 175

A blinde knight men ycallid Longias
With a spere aproched to my Sovèrain,
Launsyng his side full pitouslie, alas!
That his precious herte be clave in twain,
The purple blode eke fro the hertis vain
Doune railid right fast in moste rufull wise,
With christal water brought fro Paradise. 182

When I behelde this wofull passion,
I wote not how, by sodain avinture
My hert was persed with very compassion,
That in me remained no life of nature,
Strokis of dethe I felt without mesure,
My deth'is wounde I caught with woe opprest,
And brought to point as my hert shuld ybrest. 189

The wounde, the hert, and blode, of my darling
Shal never ſlide fro my memorial,
The byttir paines alſo of tourmenting
Within my ſoule be gravin principal;
The ſpere, alas! that was ſo ſharpe withall
So thrillid my herte, as to my feling,
That body and ſoule were at departing. 196

Sone as I might I releved up againe,
My brethe I coude not very wel reſtore,
Feling my ſelf drownid in ſo grete paine,
Both body' and ſoule me thought wer al to tore,
Violent fallis grevid me right ſore;
I wept, I bledde, and with my ſelfe I fared
As one that for his life nothing had cared. 203

I loking up unto that rufull rode
Sawe firſt the viſage pale of that figure,
But ſo pitous a ſight ſpottid with blode
Sawe nevir yet no living creäture;
So it excedid the boundes of meſure,
That mann'is minde with al his wittis five
Is nothing able that paine to diſcrive. 210

Than gan I there min armis to unbrace,
Up lifting my handis ful mourningly
I ſighid and ſore ſobbid in that place,
Both hevin and erthe might have herde me crie
Weping, and ſaid Alas! inceſſauntly,
Ah, my ſwete herte, my goſtly paramour!
Alas, I may nat thy body ſocour! 217

O bleſſid Lorde! how fierſe and how cruel
Theſe curſid wightis nowe hath the yſlaine,
Kerving, alas! thy body everidel
Wounde within wounde, full byttir is thy pain;
Nowe wolde God that I might to the attaine
To naile my body faſt unto thy tre,
So that of this paine thou mightiſt go fre! 224

I can nat reporte ne make reherſaile
Of my demening with the circumſtaunce,
But wel I wote the ſpere with every naile
Thirlid my ſoule by inwarde reſemblaunce,
Which nevir ſhall out of my remembraunce;
During my life it woll cauſe me to waile
As ofte as I remembre that bataile. 231

Ah, ye Jewes! worſe than doggis rabiate,
What moved you thus cruilly him to' aray?
He nevir diſpleſed you, nor cauſed debate,
Your love and true hertes he coveytid aye;
He preched, he teched, he ſhewid the right way,
Wherfore ye lyke tyrantes wode and way-warde.
Nowe have him thus yſlaine for his rewarde. 238

Ye ought to' have remembrid one thing ſpecial,
His favour, grace, and his magnificence;
He was your prince borne, and lorde ovir all,
Howe be it ye toke him in ſmal reverence;
He was ful meke in ſuffring your offence,
Nertheles ye devoured him with one aſſent,
As hungry wolves doth the lambe innocent. 245

Where was your pite, 'o peple mercileſſe!
Arming your ſelfe with falſhed and treſon,
On my Lorde ye have ſhewid your wodeneſſe,
Like no men but beſtis without reſon;
Your malyce he ſuffrid for the ſeſon:
Your paine wol come, ne thinke it nat to ſlacke;
Man without mercy of mercy ſhal lacke.

O traitours and maintainirs of madneſſe!
Unto your foly' I aſcribe al my paine,
Ye have me deprived of joye and gladneſſe
So deling with my Lorde and ſovèraine;
Nothing ne ſhulde I nede thus to complaine
If he' had lived in pece and tranquillite
Whom ye have ſlaine through your iniquite.

Farewel, your nobleneſſe that ſomtime did raine!
Farewel your worſhip, your glory, and fame!
Hereaftir to lyve in hate and diſdaine
Marvaile ye not; for your treſpace and blame
Unto ſhame is tournid al your gode name:
Upon you now wol wondir every nation
As peple of a moſt vile reputation.

Theſe wickid wretchis, theſe houndis of hel,
As I have tolde plaine here in this ſentence,
Were not content my dere love thus to quel,
But yet they muſt embeſile his preſence,
As I perceve; by covert violence
They have him conveied to my diſpleſure,
For here is lafte but nakid ſepulture:

Wherfore of trouth and rightfull judgèment,
That ther malice againe maye be acquited,
Aftir my verdite and aviſèment,
Of falſe murdre they ſhullin be endited,
Of theft alſo, which ſhal not be reſpited,
And in al haſte they ſhal be hanged and drawe;
I wol my ſelfe plede this cauſe in the lawe. 280

Alas! yf I with a trewe attendaunce
Had ſtyl abiddin with my Lord'is corſe,
And kept it ſtil with trewe perſeveraunce,
Than had nat beſal this woful devorſe;
But as for my paine welcome, and no force:
This ſhal be my ſonge where ſo er I go,
Departing is the grounde of al my wo. 287

I ſe right wel now in my painis ſmerte
There is no wounde of ſo grevous dolour
As is the woundè of my careful herte;
Sithin I have loſte thus my paramour
Al my ſwetneſſe is tournid into ſour;
Mirthe to my herte nothing ne maie convey
But he that bereth therof bothe locke and key. 294

The joye excellent of bliſſed Paradiſe
Maye me, alas! in no wiſe re-comforte,
Songe of angel nothing may me ſuffiſe,
As in min hertè nowe to make diſporte;
Al I refuſe but that I might reſorte
Unto my love, the wel of godelihede,
For whoſe longing I trowe I ſhal be ded. 301

Of painful labour and tourment corpo'ral
I ne make therof none excepcion,
Painis of hel I wol paſſe ovir al
My love to finde in myne affeccion;
So grete to him is my delectacion,
A thouſande timis martrid wolde I be
His bleſſid body ones if I might ſe.

About this worlde, ſo large in all compace,
I ſhal not ſpare to renne my life during,
My fete alſo ſhal not reſt in one place
Tyl of my love I may here ſome tiding,
For whoſe abſence my handis nowe I wring;
To thinke on him ceſe ſhal nevir my minde:
O gentil Jeſu! where ſhal I the finde?

Jeruſalem I wol ſerche place fro place,
Sion, the Vale of Joſaphath alſo,
And if I finde him not in al this ſpace
By Mount Oilvet to Beth'any woll I go;
Theſe waies wol I wandir and many mo,
Nazareth, Bethleem, Mountana Jude;
No travaile ſhal me paine him for to ſe.

His bliſſid face if I might ſe and finde
Serche I wolde evèry coſte and countrey,
The fardiſt parte of Egypt or hote Inde
Shulde be to me but a litil journey.
Howe is he thus gone or takin away!
If I knewe the ful trouth and certentè
Yet from this care releſid might I be.

Into wildirneſſe I thinke beſt to go,
Sithe I can no more tidinges of him here,
There may I my lyfe ledin to and fro,
There may I dwel and to no man apere;
To towne ne village woll I not come nere;
Alone in wodes, in rockes, and in caves depe,
I may at mine owne will both waile and wepe.

Myn eyin twaine withoutin variaunce
Shal nevir ceſe, I promiſe faithfully,
There for to wepin with gret aboundaunce
Byttir teris renning inceſſauntly,
The whiche teris medlid ful petouſly
With the very blode er ſhall renne alſo,
Expreſſing in mine hert the grevous wo.

Worldely fode and ſuſtenaunce I deſire none,
Soche living as I finde ſoch wol I take,
Rotis that growin on the craggy ſtone
Shal me ſuffiſe, with watir of the lake;
Than thus may I ſay for my Lord'is ſake,
Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ
In deſerto panes, die ac noćte.

My body to clothe it makith no force,
A mourning mantil ſhal be ſufficient,
The grevous woundis of his pitous corſe
Shal be to me a ful royal garnement,
He departid thus I am beſt content;
His croſſe with nailis and ſcourgis withal
Shal be my thought and paine eſpecial.

Thus wol I live, as I have here ytolde,
If I may any longè time endure,
But I fere Deth is ovir me so bolde
That of my purpose I can not be sure;
My painis encresin without mesure,
For of longe lyfe who can lay any reson?
Al thing is mortal, and hath but a seson.

I sigh ful sore, and it is ferre yfet;
Myne hert I fele now bledith inwardly,
The blody teres I may in no wise let;
Sithe of my paine I finde no remedye
I thank God of al if that I nowe dye;
His will perfournid I holde me content;
My soule let him have that hath it me lent,

For lengir to' endure it 'is intollerable,
My woful herte is inflamid so huge,
That no sorow to myne is comparable,
Sithe of my minde I ne finde no refuge,
Yet I him require as a rightful juge
To devoide fro me the inwarde sorowe,
Lest that I live not to the nexte morowe.

Within mine hert is impressid ful sore
His royal forme, his shappe, his semelines,
His porte, his chere, his godenes evirmore,
His noble persone, with al gentilnes;
He is the welle of allè parfitnes,
The very Redemir of al mankinde,
Him love I best with herte, and soule, and minde.

In his abſence my paines ful bittir be,
Right wel I may it fele nowe inwardely,
No wondir is though they hurte or ſle me,
They cauſin me to crie ſo rufully;
Myne herte oppreſſed is ſo wondirfully
Onely for him, which ſo is bright of ble,
Alas, I trowe I ſhal him nevir ſe!

My joye is tranſlate ful farre in exile,
My myrthe is chaungid into paynis colde;
My lyfe I think endurith but a while;
Anguiſhe and paine is that that I beholde,
Wherfore my handis thus I wringe and folde;
Into this grave I loke, I cal, I pray,
Deth remainith and life is borne away.

Now muſt I walk and wandir here and there,
God wot to what partis I ſhal me dreſſe,
With quaking hert wepinge many a tere,
To ſeke out my love and all my ſwetnes;
I wolde he wyſt what mortal hevines
About min herte renewith more and more,
Than wolde he nat kepe pite long in ſtore.

Withoutin him I may not longe endure,
His love ſo ſore workith within my breſt,
And er I wepe before this ſepulture
Sighing ful ſore, as mine herte ſhulde ybreſt;
During my lyfe I ſhal obtaine no reſt,
But mourne and wepe where that evir I go,
Making complaint of al my mortal wo.

Faſt I crie, but there is no audience,
My comming hidir was him for to pleſe,
My ſoule oppreſt is here with his abſence;
Alas, he liſt not ſet mine herte in eſe!
Wherfore to paine my ſelfe with al diſeſe
I ſhal not ſpare tyl he take me to grace,
Or ellis I ſhal ſterve here in this place.

But onis if that I might with him ſpeke
It were al my joy, with parfite pleſaunce;
So that I might to him myne herte breke
I ſhulde anone devoide al my grevaunce,
For he' is the bliſſe of very recreaunce;
But now, alas! I can nothing do ſo,
For in ſtede of joy naught have I but wo.

His noble corſe within min hert'is rote
Depe is ygravid, whiche ſhal nevir ſlake;
Nowe is he gone, to what place I ne wote,
I mourne, I wepe, and al is for his ſake:
Sithin he is paſte here a vowe I make
With hertely promiſe, and therto me binde,
Nevir to ceſe til that I may him finde.

Unto his mothir I thinke for to go,
Of her haply ſome comforte may I take;
But one thinge yet me ſerith and no mo,
Yf that I any mencion of him make
Of my wordis ſhe wolde trimble and quake;
And who coude her blame, ſhe having but one?
The ſonne borne away the mothir wol mone.

Sorowes many hath ſhe ſuffrid trewly
Sith that ſhe firſt conceivid him and bare,
And ſevin thinges there be moſt ſpecially
That drownith her hert in ſorowe and care,
Yet lo! in no wiſe maye they not compare
With this one now, the whiche if that ſhe knew
She wolde her painis everichone renewe.

Gret was her ſorowe by mennis ſaiyng
Whan in the temple Simeon Juſtus
Shewid to her theſe wordis, propheſiyng,
Tuam animam pertranſibit gladius;
Alſo whan Herode, that tyraunt furious,
Her childe purſuid in evèry place;
For his life went neithir mercy ne grace.

She mournid ſore whan that ſhe knewe him gone;
Full longe ſhe ſought or ſhe him founde ayen;
Whan he went to deth his croſſe him upon
It was to her ſight a full rewful paine;
Whan he hong theron betwene thevis twaine,
And the ſpere unto his herte thruſt was right,
She ſwounid, and to the grounde there ypight:

Whan ded and blody in her lappè lay
His bliſſed body, bothe handes and fete al tore,
She cryid out and ſaid, Now, welaway!
Thus arayid was nevir man before:
Whan haſt was made his body to be bore
Unto ſepulture here for to remaine
Unnethis for wo ſhe coude her ſuſtaine.

The ſorowes ſevin like ſwerdes every one
His mothir's herte woundid fro ſyde to ſyde,
But if ſhe knewe her ſonnè thus ygone
Out of this worlde ſhe ſhuld with deth yride,
For care ſhe coude no lengir here abide,
Having no more joy nor conſolacioun
Than I here ſtanding in this ſtacioun:

Wherfore her to ſe I dare nat preſume;
Fro her preſence I wol my ſelfe refraine;
Yet had I levir to dye and conſume
Than his mothir ſhulde have any more paine,
Nethèles her ſonne I wolde ſe ful faine;
His preſence was very joye and ſwetnes,
His abſence is but ſorowe' and hevineſſe.

There is no more, ſith I may him nat mete
Whom I deſire above al othir thing;
Nede I muſt take the ſouir with the ſwete,
For of 'his noble corſe I here no tiding;
Ful oftin I crie, and my handis wring:
Myne herte, alas! relentith al in paine,
Whiche wol ybraſtin both ſinewe and vaine.

Alas, howe' unhappy was this woful hour
Wherin is thus miſpendid my ſervice!
For min entent and eke my true labour
To none effecte may come in any wiſe;
Alas! I thinke if he do me diſpiſe,
And liſt not take my ſimple obſervaunce,
There is no more, but deth is my finaunce.

I have him called, *ſed non reſpondet mihi*,
Wherfore my mirth is tournid to mourning;
O, my dere Lord! *quid mali feci tibi*,
That me to comforte I finde no' erthely thing?
Alas! have compaſſion of my criyng;
Yf fro me *faciem tuam abſcondis*
There is no more but *conſumere me vis.*

Within myne hert is groundid thy figure,
That al this world'is horrible tourment
May' it not aſwage, it' is ſo without meſure,
It is ſo brenning, it is ſo fervent:
Remembir, Lorde, I have ben diligent
Evir the to pleſe onely and no mo;
Myne herte is with the where ſo er I go.

Therfore, my dere darling! *trahe me poſt te*,
And lette me not ſtandin thus deſolate;
Quia non eſt qui conſoletur me,
Myne herte for the is ſo diſconſolate,
My paines alſo nothing me moderate;
Nowe if it liſt the to ſpeke with me' alyve
Come in haſt; my herte aſondir will rive.

To the I profir, lo! my pore ſervice,
The for to pleſe aftir mine owne entent;
I offre' here, as in devout ſacrifice,
My boxe replete with precious oyntment,
Myne eyin twaine weping ſufficient,
Myne herte with anguiſhe fulfilled is, alas!
My ſoule eke redy for love out to pas.

Naught ellis have I the to pleſe or pay,
For if min herte were golde or precious ſtone
It ſhulde be thine without any delay,
With hertely chere thou ſhulde have it anone,
Why ſuffriſt thou me than to ſtande alone?
Thou haſt I trowe my weping in diſdaine,
Or els thou knowiſt nat what is my paine.

If thou withdrawe thy noble daliaunce
For ought that evir I diſpleſid the,
Thou knoweſt right wel it is but ignoraunce,
And of no knowlege for a certainte;
If I' have offendid, Lorde, forgive it me;
Gladde I am for to make ful repentaunce
Of all thing that hath ben to thy grevaunce.

Myne herte, alas! ſwellith within my breſt,
So ſore oppreſt with anguiſhe and with payne,
That al to pecis forſothe it wol breſt
But if I ſe thy blyſſid corſe againe;
For lyfe ne deth I can nat me refraine:
If that thou make delay thou maiſt be ſure
Myne hert wol lepe into this ſepulture.

Alas, my Lorde, why fareſt thou thus with me!
My tribulacion yet have in minde;
Where is thy mercy? wher is thy pite?
Whiche evir I truſtid in the to finde:
Sometime thou were to me both gode and kinde;
Lette it pleſe the my prayir to accept,
Whiche with my teris I have here bewept.

On me thou oughtist to have very routh,
Sith for the onely is al this mourning,
For sith I to the plightid firste my trouthe
I nevir varyid with discording,
And that knowist thou best my owne darling!
Why constrainist thou me thus for to wayle?
My wo forsothe can the nothing availe.

I have endurid without variaunce,
Right as thou knowst, thy lovir just and trew,
With hert and thought aye at thyn ordinaunce,
Lyke to the saphire, alwaye in one hewe;
I nevir woulde chaungin the for no newe:
Why withdrawist thou the fro my presence,
Sithins al my thought is for thine absence?

With hert intier, swete Lorde! I crie to the,
Encline thine eres to my peticioun,
And come *velociter exaudi me;*
Remembre mine hert'is disposicioun,
It may not endure in this condicioun,
Therfore out of these paines *libera me,*
And where thou arte *pone me juxta te.*

Let me beholde, o Jesu! thy blissed face,
Thy faire thy glorious angelike visage;
Bowe thine eris to my complaint, alas!
For to convey me out of this wode rage:
Alas, my Lorde! take fro me this dommage;
To my desire for mercy condiscende,
For non but thou may my grevaunce amende.

Now yet, gode Lorde! I the beſech and pray,
As thou raiſid my brothir Lazarous
From deth to life, that upon the fourth day
Came ayen in body and ſoule precious,
As gret a thing maiſt thou ſhewe unto us
Of thy ſelf by powir of thy godhed
As thou dyd of him lyinge in grave ded.

Myne hert is woundid with thy charite,
It brennith, it flamith, inceſſauntly;
Come, my dere Lorde! *ad adjuvandum me;*
Nowe be not longe, my paine to multiplie,
Leſt in the mene time I departe and die:
In thy grace I put hope and confidence
To do as pleſith thy magnificence.

Flodis of dethe and tribulacioun
Into my ſoule I fele entrid ful depe,
Alas, that here' is no conſolacioun!
Evir I waile, evir I mourne and wepe,
And ſorow hath woundid myn hert ful depe:
O dere love! no marvaile though that I die,
Sagittæ tuæ infixæ ſunt mihi.

Wandringe in this place, as in wildirneſſe,
No comforte have I ne yet aſſuraunce,
Deſolate of joye, replete with faintneſſe,
No' anſwere receving of mine enquiraunce,
Myne herte alſo grevid with diſpleſaunce,
Wherfore I may ſaye, *O Deus, Deus!*
Non eſt dolor ſicut dolor meus.

Myne hert expreſſith *quod dilexi multum*,
I may nat endure although I wold faine,
For now *ſolum ſupereſt ſepulchrum*,
I know it right wel by my hugè paine,
And thus for love I may not life ſuſtaine;
But, o my God! I muſe what aylith the,
Quod ſic repente præcipitas me. 616

Alas! I ſe' it wil none othirwiſe be,
Nowe muſt I take my leve for evirmore,
This ſore paine hath almoſt diſcomfite me,
My love's corſe I can in no wiſe reſtore;
Alas to this wo that er I was bore!
Here at this tombe nowe muſt I die and ſtarve,
Deth is aboutin my hert for to carve. 623

My teſtament I wol begin to make;
To God the Fathir my ſoule I commende,
To Jeſu my love, that died for my ſake,
My herte and al both I gyve and yſende,
In whoſe dere love my lyfe ymakith ende,
My body alſo to this monument
I here bequeth, bothe boxe and oyntèment, 630

Of al my willes, lo! nowe I make the laſt;
Right in this place within this ſepulture
I woll be buried whan I'am ded and paſt,
And on my grave I wol have this ſcripture,
Here within reſtith a goſtly creture,
Chriſt'is true lovir, Mary Magdalaine,
Whoſe herte for love ybracke in pecis twaine. 637

Ye vertuous women, tendir of nature,
Ful of pite and of compaſſion,
Reſorte I pray you to my ſepulture
To ſinge my dirige with grete devocion,
Shewe your charite' in this condicion;
Sing with pite and let your hertis wepe,
Remembring I am ded, am layd to ſlepe:

Than whan that ye begin to parte me fro,
And endid have your mourning obſervaunce,
Remembre where ſo evir that ye go
Alway to ſerche and make due enquiraunce
Aftir my love, mine hert'is ſuſtinaunce,
In every towne and in every village,
If ye may here of his noble ymage;

And if it happe by any grace at laſte
That ye my trew love finde in any coſt
Say that his Magdaleine is ded and paſte,
For his pure love hath yeldid up the goſt;
Say that of al thing I lovid him moſt,
And that I ne might not this deth eſchewe,
My painis ſo ſore dyd evir renewe.

And in tokin of love perpetual,
Whan I am buried in this place preſent,
Take out myne hert, the very rote and al,
And cloſe it within this boxe of oyntment,
To my dere love make therof a preſent,
Kneling downe with wordis lamentable
Do your meſſage, ſpeke faire and tretable:

Say that to him my selfin I commende
A thousand timis, and with herte so fre
This povir tokin say to him I sende,
Plesith his godenesse to take it in gre,
It is his owne of right, it is his fe,
Whiche he askid whan he said longe before
Gyve me thy hert and I desire no more. 672

Adue, my Lorde! my love so faire of face!
Adue, my turtle dove so freshe of hue!
Adue, my mirthe! adue, al my solace!
Adue, alas! my Saviour Lorde Jesu!
Adue, the gentillist that er I knewe!
Adue, my most excellent paramour!
Fairir than rose, swetir than lylly flour! 679

Adue, my hope of plesure eternal!
My lyfe, my welth, and my prosperite!
Mine herte of golde, my perle oriental!
Myne adamant of parfite charite!
My chefe refuge and my felycite!
My comforte and my recreacioun!
Farewel, my perpetual salvacioun! 686

Farewel, mine emperour celestial!
And most beautiful prince of al mankinde!
Adue, my Lord! of hert moste lyberal!
Farewel, my swetist bothè soule and minde!
So loving a spouse shall I nevir finde!
Adue, my soveraine, very gentilman!
Farewel, dere herte! as hertely as I can. 693

Thy wordes eloquente flowinge in ſwetneſſe
Shal no more, alas! my minde recomforte,
Wherfore my life muſt ende in bittirneſſe,
For in this worlde ſhal I nevir reſorte
To the, whiche was mine hevinly diſporte;
I ſe, alas! it wol none othir be:
Nowe farewel, the grounde of al dignite!

Adue, the fairiſt that evir was bore!
Alas, I may nat ſe your bleſſid face!
Nowe welaway that I ſhal ſe no more
Thy bleſſid viſage, ſo replete with grace,
Wherin is printid my parfite ſolace!
Adue, mine hert'is rote and al for ever!
Nowe farith wel, I muſt from the diſcever!

My ſoule for anguiſhe is nowe ful thruſty;
I faint, I faint, right ſore for hevines;
My Lorde, my ſpouſe! *cur me dereliquiſti?*
Sith I for the ſuffre al this diſtreſſe
What cauſith the to ſeme thus mercileſſe?
Sith it the pleſeth of me to make an ende
In manus tuas my ſpirite I commende.

Finis.

THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE.

WRITTEN BY GEFFERY CHAUCER.

The Argument.

A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove ſeeth a great company of knights and ladies in a dance upon the green graſs, the which being ended they all kneel down and do honour to the daiſie, ſome to the Flower and ſome to the Leaf: afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of theſe ladies the meaning hereof, which is this; they which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blaſt, are ſuch as look after beauty and worldly pleaſure, but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithſtanding the froſts and winter ſtorms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly reſpects.

When that Phœbus his chair of gold ſo hie
Had whirlid up the ſterrie ſky aloft,
And in the Bole was entrid certainly,
When ſhouris ſote of rain deſcendid ſoft,
Cauſing the ground felè timis and oft
Up for to give many an wholeſome air,
And evèry plain was yclothid faire

With newè grene, and makith ſmalè flours
To ſpringin here and there in field and mede,
So very gode and wholeſome be the ſhours,
That they renewin that was old and dede
In wintir time, and out of every ſede
Springith the herbè, ſo that every wight
Of this ſeſon wexith richt glade and light;

And I ſo gladè of the ſeſon ſwete,
Was happid thus; upon a certain night
As I lay in my bed ſlepe full unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Reſt I ne wiſt, for there n'as erthly wight
[As I ſuppoſe] had more of hertis eſe
Than I, for I n'ad ſickneſſe nor diſeſe;

Wherfore I mervaile gretly of my ſelf
That I ſo long withoutin ſlepè lay,
And up I roſe thre houris aftir twelfe,
About the ſpringing of the gladſome day,
And on I put my gear and mine aray,
And to a pleſaunt grove I gan to pas
Long or the bright ſonnè upriſin was,

In which were okis grete, ſtreight as a line,
Undir the which the graſs ſo freſhe of hew
Was newly ſprong, and an eight fote or nine
Evèry tre well fro his fellow grew,
With braunchis brode ladin with levis new,
That ſprongin out agen the ſonnè ſhene,
Some very rede, and ſome a glad light grene,

Which [as me thought] was a right pleſaunt ſight;
And eke the birdis ſongis for to here
Would have rejoiſid any erthly wight,
And I, that couth not yet in no manere
Herin the nightingale of all the yere,
Full buſily herk'nid with hert and ere
If I her voice perceve could any where:

And at the last a path of litil brede
I found, that gretly had not usid be,
For it forgrowin was with grass and wede,
That well unnethis a wight might it se;
Thought I, this path some whidir goth parde;
And so I followid till it me brought
To a right plesaunt herbir wel ywrought,

Which that benchid was, and with turfis new
Freshly turvid, whereof the grenè grass
So small, so thick, so short, so fresh of hew,
That most like to grene woll wot I it was;
The hegge also, that yedin in compas,
And closid in allè the grene herbere,
With sycamor was set and eglatere

Within, in fere so well and cunningly,
That every braunch and lefe grew by mesure
Plain as a bord, of an height by and by;
I se nevir a thing [I you ensure]
So well ydone, for he that toke the cure
It for to make [I trowe] did all his peine
To make it pass all tho that men have seine.

And shapin was this herbir rose and all
As is a pretty parlour, and also
The hegge as thick as is a castil wall,
That who that list without to stond or go,
Thogh he wold all day pryin to and fro
He should not se if there were any wight
Within or no, but one within well might

Perceve all tho that yedin there without
Into the field, that was on every ſide
Cover'd with corn and graſs, that out of doubt
Tho one would ſekin all the worldè wide
So rich a feldè could not be eſpyde
Upon no coſt, as of the quantity,
For of allè gode thing there was plenty. 77

And I, that all theſe pleſaunt ſightis ſe,
Thought ſuddainly I felt ſo ſwete an air
Of the eglenterè, that certainly
There is no hert [I deme] in ſuch diſpair,
Ne yet with thoughtis froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it ſhould ſone have bote
If it had onis felt this ſavour ſote. 84

And as I ſtode and caſt aſide mine eye
I was ware of the fairiſt medler tre
That evir yet in all my life I ſe,
As full of bloſſomis as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leping pretily
From bough to bough, and as him liſt he ete
Here and there of buddis and flouris ſwete. 91

And to the herbir ſide was adjoyning
This fairiſt tre of which I have you told,
And at the laſt the bird began to ſing
[Whan he had etin what he etin would]
So paſſing ſwetely that by many fold
It was more pleſaunt than I couth deviſe;
And whan his ſong was endid in this wiſe 98

The nightingale with ſo mery a note
Anſwerid him, that alle the wode yrong
So ſodainly, that as it were a ſote
I ſtode aſtonied, and was with the ſong
Thorow raviſhid, that till late and long
I ne wiſt in what place I was ne where,
Ayen methought ſhe ſong e'en by mine ere: 105

Wherefore I waitid about buſily
On evèry ſide if I her might ſe,
And at the laſt I gan full well aſpy
Where ſhe ſate in a freſh grene laury tre,
On the furthir ſide evin right by me,
That gave ſo paſſing a delicious ſmell,
According to the eglantere full well; 112

Whereof I had ſo inly grete pleſure,
As methought I ſurely raviſhid was
Into Paradiſe, wherein my deſire
Was for to be, and no ferthir to pas
As for that day, and on the ſotè graſs
I ſat me down, for as for mine entent
The birdis ſong was more convenient 119

And more pleſaunt to me by many fold
Than mete or drink, or any othir thing,
Thereto the herbir was ſo freſh and cold,
The wholſome ſavours eke ſo comforting,
That [as I demid] ſith the beginning
Of the worldè was nevir ſeen er than
So pleſaunt a ground of none erthly man. 126

And as I ſat the birdis herkening thus
Methought that I herd voicis ſuddainly,
The moſt ſwetiſt and moſt delicious
That evir any wightI trow trewly
Herdin in ther life, for the armony
And ſwete accord was in ſo gode muſike
That the voicis to angels moſt were like.

At the laſt out of a grove evin by
[That was right godely and pleſaunt to ſight]
I ſe where there came ſinging luſtily
A world of ladies, but to tell aright
Ther beauty grete lyith not in my might,
Ne ther array; nevirthèleſs I ſhall
Tell you a part, tho' I ſpeke not of all:

The ſurcots white of velvet well fitting
They werin clad, and the ſemis eche one,
As it werin a mannir garniſhing,
Was ſet with emeraudis one and one
By and by, but many a richè ſtone
Was ſet on the purfilis out of dout
Of collours, ſleves, and trainis, round about;

As of grete perlis round and orient,
And diamondis fine and rubys red,
And many othir ſtone of which I went
The namis now; and everich on her hede
A rich fret of gold, which withoutin drede
Was full of ſtatèly rich ſtonys ſet,
And every lady had a chapelet

On ther hedis of braunchis fresh and grene,
So wele ywrought, and so marveloufly,
That it was a right noble sight to sene,
Some of laurir, and some full plesauntly
Had chapèlets of wodebind, and sadly
Some of agnus castus w[illegible]rin also,
Chaplets fresh; but there were many of tho 161

That dauncid and eke song full sobirly,
But all they yede in maner of compace;
But one there yede in mid the company
Sole by herself; but all follow'd the pace
That she kept, whose hevinly figured face
So plesaunt was, and her wele shape person,
That of beauty she past them everichone, 168

And more richly beseen by manyfold
She was also in every manir thing;
Upon her hede full plesaunt to behold
A coron of gold rich for any king,
A braunch of agnus castus eke bering
In her hand, and to my sight trewily
She lady was of all the company; 175

And she began a roundell lustily
That *Sus le foyle de vert moy* men call
Sine & mon joly cœur est endormy,
And than the company answerid all
With voicis swete entunid and so small
That methought it the swetist melody
That evir I herd in my life sothly. 182

And thus they all came dauncing and ſinging
Into the middis of the mede echone
Before the herbir where I was ſitting,
And God wot I thought I was well bigone,
For than I might aviſe them one by one
Who fairiſt was, who beſt could dance or ſing,
Or who moſt womanly was in all thing.

They had not dauncid but a little throw
When that I herd not fer of ſodainly
So grete a noiſe of thundering trumpis blow
As though it ſhould have departid the ſkie,
And aftir that within a while I ſie
From the ſame grove where the ladies came out
Of men of armis coming ſuch a rout

As all men on erth had ben aſſemblid,
On that place well horſid for the nonis,
Stering ſo faſt that all the erth tremblid;
But for to ſpeke of richis and ſtonis,
And men and horſe, I trow the large wonis
Of Pretir John, ne all his treſory,
Might not unneth have bought the tenth party.

Of their array whoſo liſt to here more
I ſhall reherſe ſo as I can a lite.
Out of the grove that I ſpeke of before
I ſe come firſt, all in their clokis white,
A company that wore for ther delite
Chapèlets freſh of okis ſerial
But newly ſprong, and trumpets were they all;

On every trump hanging a brode bannere
Of fine tartarium, full richly bete,
Every trumpet his lord'is armis bere
About ther neckis, with grete perlis ſete,
Collaris brode, for coſt they wou'd not lete,
As it would ſeem, for ther ſcochons echone
Were ſet about with many a precious ſtone;

Ther horſis harneis was all white alſo;
And aftir them next in one company
Camin kingis at armis and no mo,
In clokis of white cloth with gold richly,
Chaplets of grene on their heds on hye,
The crownis that they on their ſcotchons bere
Were ſet with perl, and ruby, and ſaphere,

And eke grete diamondis many one;
But all ther horſe harneis and other gere
Was in a ſute according everichone,
As ye have herd the forſaid trumpets were,
And by ſeming they were nothing to lere,
And ther guiding they did ſo manirly;
And aftir them came a grete company

Of heraudis and purſevauntis eke,
Arrayid in clothis of white velvet,
And hardily they were nothing to ſeke
How they on them ſhouldin the harneis ſet,
And every man had on a chapèlet,
Scotchonis and eke horſe harneis in dede
They had in ſute of them that 'fore them yede.

Next after theſe appere in armour bright,
All ſave their hedis, ſemely knightis nine,
And every claſp and nail, as to my ſight,
Of ther harneis were of red gold ſo fine,
With cloth of gold, and furrid with ermine,
Were the tappouris of their ſtedis ſtrong,
Both wide and large, that to the ground did hong;

And every boſs of bridle and paitrel
That they had on was worth, as I would wene,
A thouſand pound; and on ther hedis well
Dreſſid were crounis of the laurir grene,
The beſt ymade that evir I had ſene;
And every knight had aftir him riding
Thre henchmen, ſtill upon him awaiting;

Of which every (firſt) on a ſhort trunchon
His lord'is helmet bore ſo richly dight
That the worſt of them was worth the ranſoune
Of any king; the ſecond a ſhield bright
Bare at his back; the thred barin upright
A mighty ſpere, full ſharp yground and kene,
And evèry child ware of levis grene

A freſh chap'let upon his hairis bright;
And clokis white of fine velvet they were,
Ther ſtedis trappid and arayid right,
Without difference as ther lordis were;
And aftir them on many' a freſh courſere
There came of armid knightis ſuch a rout
That they beſprad the large field about;

And all they werin, aftir ther degrees,
Chappèlets new, or made of laurir grene,
Or ſome of oke, or ſome of othir trees,
Some in ther hondis barin boughis ſhene,
Some of laurir, and ſome of okis bene,
Some of hawthorne, and ſome of the wodebind,
And many mo which I have not in mind. 273

And ſo they came ther horſe freſhly ſtirring
With bloudy ſownis of ther trompis loud;
There ſe I many' an uncouth diſguiſing
In the array of thilkè knightis proud;
And at the laſt as evenly as they coud
They toke ther place in middis of the mede,
And every knight turnid his horſis hede 280

To his felow, and lightly laid a ſpere
Into the reſt, and ſo juſtis began
On ev'ery part aboutin here and there;
Some brake his ſpere, ſome threw down horſe and man,
About the felde aſtray the ſtedis ran;
And to behold their rule and govirnaunce
I you enſure it was a grete pleſaunce. 287

And ſo the juſtis laſt an hour and more,
But tho that crownid were in laurir grene
Did win the priſe; their dintis were ſo ſore
That there was none agenſt them might ſuſtene,
And the juſting allè was left off clene;
And fro ther horſe the nine alight anon,
And ſo did all the remnaunt everichone, 294

And forth they yede togidir twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy ſight,
Toward the ladies on the grenè plain,
That ſong and dauncid, as I ſaid now right;
The ladies as ſone as they godely might
They brakin off both the ſong and the daunce,
And yede to mete them with full glad ſemblaunce:

And every lady toke full womanly
By the hond a knight, and ſo forth they yede
Unto a faire laurir that ſtode faſt by,
With levis laid, the boughis of grete brede,
And to my dome ther nevir was indede
A man that had ſene half ſo faire a tre,
For undirneth it there might well have be

An hundrid perſons at ther own pleſaunce
Shadowid fro the hete of Phœbus bright,
So that they ſhouldin have felt no grevaunce
Neithir for rain, ne haile, that them hurt might;
The ſavour eke rejoice would any wight
That had be ſick or melancholious,
It was ſo very gode and vertuous.

And with grete rev'rence they enclinid low
Unto the tre ſo ſote and fair of hew,
And aftir that within a litil throw
They all began to ſing and daunce of new;
Some ſong of love, ſome plaining of untrew,
Environing the tre that ſtode upright,
And evir yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last I cast mine eie aside,
And was ware of a lusty company
That came roming out of the feldè wide,
And hond in hond a knight and a lady,
The ladies all in surcotes, that richly
Purfilid were with many a rich stone,
And every knight of grene ware mantlis on, 329

Embroudid wele, so as the surcots were,
And everich had a chapelet on her hed,
[Which did right wele upon the shining here]
Makid of godely flouris white and red,
The knightis eke that they in hondè led
In sute of them ware chaplets everichone,
And before them went minstrels many one, 336

As harpis, pipis, lutis, and sautry,
Allè in grene, and on ther hedis bare
Of diverse flouris made full craftily,
All in a sute, godely chaplets they ware,
And so dauncing into the mede they fare,
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All ovirsprad with flouris in compas, 343

Whereto they enclinid evèrichone
With grete revèrence, and that full humbly;
And at the last there tho began anon
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie,
For (as methought) among her notis swete
She said *Si douce est la Margarete!* 350

Then they allè anſwerid her in fere
So paſſingly well and ſo pleſauntly,
That it was a moſt bliſfull noiſe to here;
But I n'ot how it happid, ſodainly
As about none the ſonn ſo fervently
Waxe hotè that the pretty tendir floures
Had loſt the beauty of their freſh collours.

Forſhronke with hete the ladies eke to brent,
That they ne wiſt where they them might beſtow,
The knightis ſwelt, for lack of ſhade nie ſhent,
And aftir that within a litil throw
The wind began ſo ſturdily to blow
That down goth all the flowris everichone,
So that in all the mede there laft not one,

Save ſuch as ſuccoured were among the leves
Fro every ſtorme that mightè them aſſaile,
Growing undir the heggis and thick greves;
And aftir that there came a ſtorme of haile
And rain in fere, ſo that withoutin faile
The ladies ne the knightis n'ade o' thred
Dry on them, ſo dropping wet was ther wede.

And when the ſtorme was clene paſſid away
Tho in the white, that ſtode undir the tre,
They felt nothing of all the grete affray
That they in grene without had in ybe;
To them they yede for routh and for pite,
Them to comfort aftir their grete diſeſe,
So fain they were the helpleſſe for to eſe.

Than I was ware how one of them in grene
Had on a coron rich and well-fitting,
Wherfore I demid well she was a quene,
And tho in grene on her were awaiting;
The ladies then in white that were coming
Towardis them, and the knightis in fere,
Began to comfort them and make them chere. 385

The quene in white, that was of grete beauty,
Toke by the honde the quene that was in grene,
And seidè, Sustir, I have grete pity
Of your annoy and of your troublous tene
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So long, alas! and if that it you plese
To go with me I shall do you the ese 392

In all the plesure that I can or may;
Whereof that othir, humbly as she might,
Thankid her, for in right evil array
She was with storme and hete I you behight;
And evèry lady then anon right
That were in white one of them toke in grene
By the hond, which when the knightis had sene 399

In like manir eche of them toke a knight
Clad in the grene, and forth with them they fare
To an heggè, where that they anon right
To makin these justis they would not spare
Boughis to hew down and eke trees to square,
Wherewith they made them stately firis grete
To dry ther clothis, that were wringing wete; 406

And aftir that of herbis that there grew
They made for bliſtirs of the ſonne brenning
Ointmentis very gode, wholſome and new,
Where that they yede the ſick faſt anointing;
And aftir that they yede about gadring
Pleſant ſaladis, which they made them ete
For to refreſhe ther grete unkindly hete.

The lady of the Lefè then gan to pray
Her of the Floure [for ſo to my ſeming
They ſhould be callid as by ther array]
To ſoupe with her, and eke for any thing
That ſhe ſhould with her all her pepill bringe,
And ſhe ayen in right godely manere
Thankith her faſt of her moſt frendly chere,

Saying plainèly that ſhe would obay
With all her hert all her commandèment;
And then anon without lengir delay
The lady of the Lefe hath one yſent
To bring a palfray aftir her intent,
Arrayid wele in fair harneis of gold,
For nothing lackid that to him long ſhold:

And aftir that to all her company
She made to purvey horſe and every thing
That they nedid, and then full haſtily
Even by the herbir where I was ſitting
They paſſid all, ſo merrily ſinging
That it would have comfortid any wight:
But then I ſe a paſſing wondir ſight,

For then the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurir ſete, and did her might
The whole ſervice to ſing longing to May,
All ſodainly began to take her flight,
And to the lady of the Leſe forthright
She flew, and ſet her on her hand ſoftly,
Which was a thing I mervail'd at gretly.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medlar tre
Was fled for hete unto the buſhis cold,
Unto the lady of the Flowre gan fle,
And on her hond he ſet him as he wold,
And pleſauntly his wingis gan to fold,
And for to ſing they peine them both as ſore
As they had do of all the day before.

And ſo theſe ladies rode forth a grete pace,
And all the rout of knightis eke in fere;
And I that had ſene all this wondir caſe
Thought that I would aſſay in ſome manere
To know fully the trouth of this mattere,
And what they were that rode ſo pleſauntly:
And when they were the herbir paſſid by

I dreſt me forth, and happid mete anon
A right fair lady, I do you enſure,
And ſhe came riding by her ſelf alone,
Allè in white, with ſemblaunce full demure;
I her ſalued, bad her gode avinture
Mote her befall, as I coud moſt humbly,
And ſhe anſwered, My doughtir, gramercy!

Madame, quoth I, if that I durſt enquere
Of you, I wold fain of that company
Wit what they be that paſſed by this harbere.
And ſhe ayen anſwerid right frendly,
My doughtir, all tho that paſſid hereby
In white clothing be ſervants everichone
Unto the Lefe, and I my ſelf am one.

Se ye not her that crownid is (quod ſhe)
Allè in white? Madame, then quod I, Yes.
That is Dian, goddeſs of Chaſtity,
And for bicauſe that ſhe a maidin is
Into her hond the branch ſhe berith this
That agnus caſtus men call propirly;
And all the ladies in her company

Which ye ſe of that herbè chaplets were
Be ſuch as han alwey kept maidinhede,
And all they that of laurir chaplets bere
Be ſuch as hardy were in manly dede,
Victorious, name which nevir may be dede,
And all they were ſo worthy of ther honde
In their time that no one might them withſtonde;

And tho that were chapèlets on ther hede
Of freſh wodebind be ſuch as nevir were
To Love untrue in word, in thought, ne dede,
But ay ſtedfaſt, ne for pleſance ne fere,
Tho that they ſhulde ther hertis all to tere,
Woud never flit, but evir were ſtedfaſt
Till that ther livis there aſſundir braſt.

Now, fair Madam! quod I, yet woud I pray
Your ladiſhip [if that it mightin be]
That I might knowe by ſome manir of wey,
Sithin that it hath likid your beaute
The trouth of theſe ladies for to tell me,
What that theſe knightis be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and were the Flour,

And why that ſome did rev'rence to the tre,
And ſome unto the plot of flouris fair?
With right gode will, my doughtir fair! quod ſhe,
Sith your deſire is gode and debonaire:
Tho nine crounid be very exemplaire
Of all honour longing to chivalry,
And thoſe certain be clept The Nine Worthy

Which that ye may ſe riding all before,
That in ther time did many'a noble dede,
And for ther worthineſs full oft have bore
The crown of laurir levis on ther hede,
As ye may in your oldè bokis rede,
And how that he that was a conqueror
Had by laurir alwey his moſt honour:

And tho that barin bowis in ther hond
Of the precious laurir ſo notable
Be ſuch as were [I woll ye undirſtond]
Moſt noble Knightis of The Round Table,
And eke the Douſeperis honourable,
Which they bere in the ſign of victory,
As witneſs of ther dedis mightily:

Eke there be Knightis old of the Gartir,
That in ther timis did right worthily,
And the honour they did to the laurir
Is for by it they have ther laud wholly,
Ther triumph eke and martial glory,
Which unto them is more perfite riches
Than any wight imagin can or geſſe;

For one Lefe givin of that noble tre
To any wight that hath done worthily
[An it be done ſo as it ought to be]
Is more honour than any thing erthly,
Witneſs of Rome, that foundir was truly
Of all knighthode and dedis marvelous,
Record I take of Titus Livius.

And as for her that crounid is in grene,
It is Flora, of theſe flouris goddeſſe,
And all that here on her awaiting bene
It are ſuch folk that lovid idleneſſe,
And not delite in no kind beſineſſe
But for to hunt, and hawke, and pley in medes,
And many othir ſuch like idle dedes.

And for the grete delite and the pleſaunce
They have to the Flour, and ſo reverently
They unto it doin ſuch obeiſaunce,
As ye may ſe. Now, fair Madame! quod I,
[If I durſt aſk] what is the cauſe and why
That knightis have the enſigne of honour
Rathir by the Lefè than by the Flour?

Sothly, doughtir, quod ſhe, this is the trouth,
For knightes evir ſhoud be perſevering
To ſeke honour withont feintiſe or ſlouth,
Fro wele to bettir in all manir thing,
In ſign of which with levis ay laſting
They be rewardid aftir ther degre,
Whoſe luſty grene may not appairid be,

But ay keping ther beauty freſh and grene,
For ther n'is no ſtorme that may them deface,
Ne hail nor ſnowe, ne wind nor froſtis kene,
Wherfore they have this propirty and grace;
And for the Flour within a litil ſpace
Wollin be loſt, ſo ſimple of nature
They be that they no grevaunce may endure:

And every ſtorme woll blowe them ſone away,
Ne they laſtè not but for a ſeſon,
That is the cauſe [the very trouth to ſay]
That they may not by no way of reſon
Be put to no ſuch occupacion.
Madame, quod I, with all mine whole ſerviſe
I thank you now in my moſt humble wiſe;

For now I am aſcertain'd thoroughly
Of every thing I deſirid to knowe.
I am right glad that I have ſaid, ſothly,
Ought to your pleſure, (if ye will me trow.)
Quod ſhe ayen. But to whom do ye owe
Your ſervice, and which wollin ye honour
[Pray tell me] this year, the Lefe or the Flour?

Madam, quod I, although I leſt worthy,
Unto the Lefe I ow mine obſervaunce.
That is, quod ſhe, right well done certainly,
And I pray God to honour you advaunce,
And kepe you fro the wickid remembraunce
Of Malèbouch and all his cruiltie,
And all that gode and well-condition'd be;

For here I may no lengir now abide,
But I muſt follow the grete company
That ye may ſe yondir before you ride;
And forthwith as I couth moſt humily
I toke my leve of her, and ſhe gan hie
Aftir them as faſt as evir ſhe might,
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night,

And put all that I had ſene in writing,
Undir ſupport of them that luſt it rede.
O little boke! thou art ſo unconning,
How darſt thou put thy ſelf in prees for drede?
It is wondir that thou wexiſt not rede,
Sith that thou woſt full lite who ſhall behold
Thy rude langage full boyſtouſly unfold.

Finis.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

WITH timerous herte and trembling hand of drede,
Of cunning nakid, bare of eloquence,
Unto the flour of port in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metris hath ne flouris of ſentence,
Saufe that me liſt my writing to convey
In that I can to pleſe her high nobley.

The bloſomes freſh of Tulius gardein ſote
Preſent thei not, my mattir for to borne,
Poemes of Virgile takin here no rote,
Ne crafte of Galfride may not here ſojourne;
Why n'am I cunning? 'o wel maie I morne
For lacke of ſcience, that I can nat write
Unto the princes of my lyfe aright!

No termes are digne unto her excellence,
So is ſhe ſpronge of noble ſtripe and high;
A world of honour and of revèrence
There is in her, this wil I teſtifie:
Caliope, thou ſiſtir wiſe and ſly,
And thou Minerva! guide me with thy grace,
That langage rude my mattir not deface.

The Court of Love] This book is an imitation of The Romaunt of the Roſe, ſhewing that all are ſubject to love, what impediments ſoever to the contrary, containing alſo thoſe 20 ſtatutes that are to be obſerved in The Court of Love. *Urry.*

Thy ſugir dropis ſwete of Helicon
Diſtil in me, thou gentle Muſe! I praye,
And the Melpomene I cal anone
Of ignoraunce the miſte to chace awaye,
And geve me grace ſo for to write and ſaie
That ſhe my lady of her worthineſſe
Accept in gre this litil ſhort treteſſe,

That is entitlid thus, *The Courte of Love;*
And ye that ben metriciens me excuſe,
I you beſeche, for Venus ſake above,
For what I mene in this ye nede not muſe;
And if ſo be my lady it refuſe
For lake of ornate ſpeche, I wolde be wo
That I preſume to her to writin ſo.

But my entente and al my buſie cure
Is for to write this treteſſe as I can,
Unto my lady ſtable, true, and ſure,
Faithful and kind, ſith firſte that ſhe began
Me to accept in ſervice as her man;
To her be al the pleſure of this boke,
That when her like ſhe may it rede and loke.

When I was yong, at xviii yere of age,
Luſty and light, deſirous of pleſaunce,
Approching on full ſadde and ripe corage,
Love artid me to do my obſervaunce
To his eſtate, and done him obeiſaunce,
Commaundinge me *The Court of Love* to ſe,
A lite beſide the Mounte of Cithere;

There Citherea goddeſſe was and quene,
Honourid highly for her majeſte,
And eke her ſonne, the mighty god I wene,
Cupide the blind, that for his dignite
A M. lovirs worſhipp on ther kne;
There was I bid in paine of deth to pere
By Mercury, the wingid meſſingere: 56

So than I went by ſtrange and ferre countrees,
Enquiringe aye what coaſte had to it drewe
The Court of Love, and thidirward as bees
At laſt I ſe the peple gan purſue;
Anon me thought ſome wight was ther that knew
Where that the *Court* was holdin ferre or nie,
And aftir than ful faſte I ganne me hie. 63

Anon as I them ovirtoke I ſaid,
Heile, frendis! whithir purpoſe ye to wend?
For ſoth, (quod one) that anſwered lyche a maid,
To *Lov'is Courte* now go we, gentil frend!
Where is that place, (quod I) my felowe hend?
At Citheron, Sir, ſaide he, withoute doute,
The kinge of Love, and al his noble route, 70

Dwelling within a caſtil rially.
So than apace I journid forth amonge;
And as he ſaide ſo fond I there truly,
For I behelde the touris high and ſtronge,
And high pinaclis large of hight and longe,
With plate of gold beſpred on every ſide,
And precious ſtones, the ſtone werke for to hide. 77

No ſaphire of Inde, no rube riche of price,
There lackid then, nor emèraude ſo grene,
Balis Turkis, ne thing to my deviſe
That may the caſtil makin for to ſhene,
All was as bright as ſterres in wintir bene,
And Phœbus ſhone to make his pece ageine
For treſpas done to high eſtatis tweine: 84

Venus and Mars, the god and goddeſſe clere,
When he them founde in armis cheinid faſte,
Venus was than ful ſad of herte and chere,
But Phœbus bemis, ſtreight as is the maſte,
Upon the caſtil ginnith he to caſt
To pleſe the lady, princes of that place,
In ſigne he lokith aftir Lov'is grace: 91

For ther n'is god in heven or hel iwys
But he hath ben right ſoget unto Love,
Jove, Pluto, or what ſo evir he is,
Ne creäture in erth or yet above,
Of this the revers may no wight approve;
But furthirmore the caſtill to deſcrie
Yet ſawe I nevir none ſo large and hie, 98

For unto heven it ſtretchith I ſuppoſe,
Within and out depeintid wondirly,
With many' a thouſand daiſy rede as roſe,
And white alſo, this ſawe I verily,
But what tho deiſis might do ſignifie
Can I not tel, ſauſe that the quen'is floure
Alceſte it was, that kept ther her ſojoure, 105

Which undir Venus lady was and quene,
And Admete kyng and soverain of that place,
To whom obeied the ladies gode xix,
With many' a thoufand othir bright of face,
And yong men fele came forth with lufti pace,
And agid eke, ther homage to difpofe,
But what they were I coud not well difclofe. 112

Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dreffe
Into an halle of noble apparaile,
With arras fpred and cloth of gold I geffe,
And othir filke of efyir availe;
Undir the cloth of ther eftate, sauns faile,
The king and quene there fat, as I beheld;
It paffid joye of Helifè the feld. 119

There faintis have ther cominge and reforte
To feen the kinge fo rially befene
In purple clad, and eke the quene in forte,
And on ther heddis fawe I crounis tweine
With ftonis fret, fo that it was no paine
Withoutin mete and drinke to ftand and fe
The king'is honor and the rialte. 126

And for to trete of ftatis with the king,
That ben of counfell chefe, and with the quene;
The king had Daungir nere to him ftanding,
The quene of Love Difdain, and that was fene,
For by the faith I fhal to God I wene
Was nevir ftraungir none in her degre
Than was the quene in caftinge of her eye. 133

And as I ſtode perceving her aparte,
And eke the bemis ſhininge of her eyen,
Me thought they werin ſhapin lyche a darte,
Sharpe and perſinge, ſmale, and ſtreight as a line,
And al her here it ſhone as golde ſo fine,
Disſhivil, criſpe, doune hanging at her backe
A yard in length, and ſouthely than I ſpake:

O bright *Regina!* who made the ſo faire?
Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
Wher wonneth the god, how far above the eyre?
Grete was his crafte, and grete was his delite;
Now marvil I nothing that ye do hight
The quene of Love, and occupie the place
Of Cithare: now, ſwete lady! thy grace.

In mewet ſpake I, ſo that nought aſterte
By no condicion word that might be hard,
But in my inward thought I gan adverte,
And oft I ſaid My wit is dul and hard,
For with her beautie thus God wot I ferde
As doeth the man yraviſhid with ſight,
When I beheld her criſtal eyen ſo bright,

No reſpecte havyng what was beſte to done,
Till right anone beholding here and there
I ſpied a frend of myne, and that ful ſone,
A gentil woman, was the chambirere
Unto the quene, that hote as ye ſhall here,
Philobone, that lovid al her life;
Whan ſhe me ſey ſhe led me forth as blife,

And me demaundid how and in what wise
I thithir come, and what my erand was?
To sene the Courte (quod I) and al the guise,
And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
And mercy aske for al my grete trespasse;
That I none erste come to The Courte of Love
Foryeve me this, ye goddis al above.

That is wel said (quod Philobone') in dede;
But were ye not assomoned to appere
By Mercurius, for that is al my drede?
Yes, gentill feire! (quod I) now am I here.
Ye, yet what tho though that be true, my dere?
Of your fre wil ye shuld have come unsente,
For ye did not I deme ye will be shente:

For ye that reigne in youth and lustines,
Pampired with ese, and jalous in your age,
Your dutie is, as far as I can gesse,
To *Lov'is Courte* to dressin your viage
Assone as Nature makith you so sage
That ye may know a woman from a swan,
Or whan your fote is growin halfe a span.

But sithe that ye by wilful negligence
This xviii yere hath kept your selfe at large
The gretir is your trespas and offence,
And in your neck you mote bere all the charge,
For bettir were ye ben withoutin barge
Amidde the se in tempest and in rayne
Then bidin here receving wo and pain

That ordeined is for ſoche as them abſente
Fro *Lov'is Courte* by yeris long and fele;
I ley my life ye ſhal ful ſone repente,
For Love wil reive youre coloure, luſt, and hele,
Eke ye muſt baite on many' an hevy mele:
No force iwis, I ſtired you longe agon
To drawe to Courte, quod litil Philobon;

Ye ſhal wel ſe how rough and angry face
The king of Love wil ſhewe when ye him ſe;
By myn adviſe knele down and aſke him grace,
Eſchewing peril and adverſite,
For wel I wot it wolle none othir be:
Comforte is none ne council to your eſe,
Why wil ye then the king of Love diſpleſe?

O mercie, God! (quod iche) I me repent,
Caitife and wretche, in hert, in wil, and thought,
And aftir this ſhal be mine whole entent
To ſerve and pleſe, how dere that love be bought;
Yet ſith I have mine owne penaunce iſought
With humble ſpirite ſhal I it receve,
Though that the king of Love my life bereve;

And though that fervent Lov'is qualite
In me did nevir worche truly, yet I
With al obeiſaunce and humilite,
And benigne herte, ſhal ſerve him til I die;
And he that lord of might is grete and hie
Right as him liſt me chaſtice and correcte,
And puniſhe me, with treſpace thus enfecte.

These wordis said she caught me by the lap,
And led me furth in til a temple round,
Bothe large and wide, and as my blessid hap
And gode avinture was right sone I founde
A tabirnacle reisid from the grounde
Where Venus sat and Cupide by her side,
Yet half for drede I can my visage hide; 224
And eft againe I lokid and behelde,
Seing ful sundry peple in the place
And mistir folke, and some that might not welde
Ther limmis wele, me thought a woundir case,
The temple shone with windowes al of glasse
Bright as the day, with manie' a faire ymage,
And there I se the freshe Quene of Carthage, 231
Dido, that brent her beaute for the love
Of fals Æneas, and the weimenting
Of her Anelida, true as turtil dove
To Arcite fals; and there was in peinting
Of many' a prince and many' a doughty king
Whose martirdom was shewed about the walles,
And how that fele for love had suffrid falles. 238
But sore I was abashid and astonied
Of al tho folke that there were in that tide,
And than I askid where they haddin woned?
In divers courtis, (quod she) here beside:
In sondrie clothing mantilwise full wide
They were arraied, and did ther sacrifice
Unto the god and goddesse in ther guise. 245

Lo, yondir folke (quod ſhe) that knele in blewe,
They were the colour ay and evir ſhal,
In ſigne they were and evir wil be true,
Withoutin chaunge, and ſouthely yondir all
That ben in blak, with mourning crie and call
Unto the goddes, for ther lovis bene
Some ferre, ſom dede, ſom al to ſherpe and kene.

Yea, than, (quod I) what done theſe preſtis here,
Nonnis, and hermites, freris, and all tho
That ſit in white, in ruſſet, and in grene?
Forſothe (quod ſhe) they wailin of ther wo.
O mercie, Lord! may they ſo come and go
Frely to Court, and have ſoche libertie?
Yea, men of eche condicion and degre,

And women eke, for truly there is none
Excepcion made, ne nevir was ne may;
This Courte is ope and fre for everichone;
The king of Love he wil not ſay them nay;
He takith al in pore or riche array
That mekely ſewe unto his excellence
With al ther herte and al ther revèrence.

And walking thus aboute with Philobone
I ſe where come a meſſengere in hie
Streight from the king, whiche let commaunde anone
Throughout the Courte to make an ho and crie,
All new come folke abide; and wote ye why?
The king'is luſt is for to ſeen you ſone:
Come nere; let ſe; his wil mote nede be done.

Than gan I me present tofore the king
Trembling for fere, with visage pale of hewe,
And many' a lovir with me was kneling,
Abashed sore, til unto the time they knewe
The sentence yeve of his entent full trew;
And at the last the king hath me behold
With sterne visage, and seid, What doth this olde, 280

Thus ferre ystope in yeris, com so late
Unto the Courte? For sothe, my liege, (quod I)
An hundrid tyme I have ben at the gate
Afore this tyme, yet coude I ner espie
Of myne acqueintaunce eny in mine eye,
And *Shamefastnes* away me ganne to chace,
But now I me submitte unto your grace. 287

Wel, al is pardoned, with condicion
That thou be trew from hensforth to thy might,
And servin Love in thine entencion;
Swere this, and than as ferre as it is right
Thou shalte have grace here in my quen'is sight.
Yes, by the faith I owe your crown I swere,
Though Deth therfore me thirlith with his spere. 294

And whan the kinge had sene us everychone
He let commaunde an officir in hie
To take our faith, and shew us one by one
The statutes of the Courte full besily:
Anon the boke was leide before ther eye,
To rede and se what thing we must observe
In *Lov'is Courte* till that we dye and sterve. 301

And for that I was lettrid there I red
The ſtatutes whole of *Lov'is Courte* and hall.
The firſte ſtatute that on the boke was ſpred
Was to be true in thought and dedis al
Unto the king of Love, the lorde ryall,
And to the quene as faithful and as kinde
As I coude thinke with herte, and will, and minde. 308

The ſeconde ſtatute ſecretly to kepe
Council of Love, not blowing every where
Al that I knowe, and let it ſinke and flete;
It may not ſowne in every wight'is ere,
Exiling ſlaundir ay for dred and fere,
And to my lady whiche I love and ſerve
Be true and kinde, her grace for to deſerve. 315

The thirde ſtatute was clerely writ alſo,
Withoutin chaunge to live and die the ſame,
None othir love to take for wele ne wo,
For blinde delite, for erneſt nor for game,
Without repent, for laughing or for grame,
To bidin ſtil in ful perſeveraunce;
Al this was whole the king'is ordinaunce. 322

The fourth ſtatute to purchace er to here
And ſtirin folke to love, and betin fire
On Venus auter here aboute and there,
And preche to them of Love and hote deſire,
And tel how Love wil quitin wel ther hire;
This muſt be kept; and loth me to diſpleſe
If Love be wroth paſſe, for therby is eſe. 329

The V. statute not to be daungirous
If that a thought would reve me of my slepe,
Nor of a sight to be ovir squemous,
And so verely this statute was to kepe,
To turne and wallowe in my bed and wepe
When that my lady of her cruiltie
Would from her herte exilin al pite.

The VI. statute it was for me to use
Alone to wandir voide of company,
And on my lad'is beautie for to muse,
And to thinkin no force to live or die,
And eft again to thinke the remedy
How to her grace I might anon attain,
And tel my wo unto my sovèraine.

The VII. statute was to be pacient
Whethir my lady joyful were or wroth,
For wordis glad or hevy diligent,
Whedir that she me heldin lefe or loth,
And hereupon I put was to mine othe
Her for to serve and lowely to obey,
And shewe my chere ye xx sith aday.

The VIII. statute, to my rememberaunce,
Was for to speke and pray my lady dere
With hourely labour and gret entendaunce
Me for to love with al her herte entere,
And me desire and make me joyful chere,
Right as she is surmouning every faire,
Of beautie wel, and gentil, debonaire.

The IX. ſtatute, with lettris writ of golde,
This was the ſentence, how that I and al
Shulde evir dred to be to ovirbolde
Her to diſpleſe, and truly ſo I ſhal,
But ben content for all thing that may fal,
And mekely take her chaſtiſement and yerde,
And to offende her evir ben aferde.

The X. ſtatute was egally to' diſcerne
Betwene the lady' and thine abilite,
And thinke thy ſelfe arte nevir like to yerne
By right her mercy nor of equite,
But of her grace and womanly pite,
For though thy ſelfe be noble in thy ſtrene
A thouſande folde more nobil is thy quene.

Thy liv'is lady and thy ſovèraine,
That hath thin herte all whole in govirnaunce,
Thou maieſt no wiſe it takin to diſdaine
To put the humblie at her ordinaunce,
And give her fre the reine of her pleſaunce,
For *Libertie is thing that women loke*,
And truely els the mattir is acroke.

The XI. ſtatute thy ſignis for to knowe
With eye and fingir, and with ſmilis ſofte,
And lowe to couche, and alwaie for to ſhowe
For drede of ſpyis for to winkin ofte,
But ſecretly to bryng a ſigh alofte,
And eke beware of ovir moche reſorte,
For that para'venture ſpillith all thy ſport.

The XII. statute remembir to observe,
For all the paine thou hast for love and wo
All is to lite her mercie to deserve;
Thou musten then thinke wher er thou ride or go,
And mortall woundis suffre thou also,
All for her sake, and thinke it well besette
Upon thy love, for it maie not be bette.

The XIII. statute whilome is to thinke
What thing maie best thy ladie like and plese,
And in thine hert'is botome let it sinke;
Some thing devise, and take for it thine ese,
And sende it her, that maie her herte appese,
Some herte or ryng, or lettir or devise,
Or precions stone; but spare not for no price.

The XIV. statute eke thou shalt assaie
Firmely to kepe the moste parte of thy life;
Wishe that thy ladie in thine armis laie,
And nightly dreme thou hast thy nighte's herte's wife
Swetly in armis, strainyng her as blise,
And when thou seest it is but fantasie
Se that thou sing not ovir merily;

For *To moche joye hath ofte a wofull ende;*
It longith eke, this statute for to holde,
To deme thy ladie evirmore thy frende,
And thinke thy self in no wise a cocolde;
In every thyng she doeth but as she should:
Construe the best, beleve no talis newe,
For *Many' a lye is tolde that semeth full true;*

But thinke that ſhe, ſo bountèous and faire,
Coud not be falſe; imagine this algate;
And think that tonges wickid would her appaire,
Slanderyng her name and worſhipfull eſtate,
And lovirs true to ſettin at debate;
And though thou ſeeſt a faute right at thine eye
Excuſe it blive, and gloſe it pretilie. 420

The XV. ſtatute uſe to ſwere and ſtare,
And counterfeite a leſyng hardily
To ſave thy ladie's honour every whare,
And put thy ſelf to fightin boldily;
Saie ſhe is gode, vertuous, and ghoſtly,
Clere of entent, and herte, and thought, and will;
And argue not for reſon ne for ſkill 427

Againe thy ladie's pleſure ne entent,
For Love will not be counterpleted in dede;
Saie as ſhe ſaieth, then ſhalt thou not be ſhent,
The crowe is white. Ye, truly ſo I rede.
And aye what thing that ſhe the will forbede
Eſchue all that, and give her ſoverainte;
Her appetite folowe in all degre. 434

The XVI. ſtatute kepe it if thou maie,
Seven ſith at night, thy ladie for to pleſe,
And ſeven at midnight, ſe'ven at morow daie,
And drinke a caudill erely for thine eſe:
Doe this, and kepe thine hedde from all diſeſe,
And winne the garlande here of lovirs all
That evir came in Court or evir ſhall. 441

Full fewe think I this ſtatute hold and kepe,
But truely this my reſon giveth me fele
That ſome lovirs ſhould rather fall aſlepe
Then take on hande to pleſe ſo oft and wele:
There laie none othe to this ſtatute adele,
But kepe who might as gave him his corage:
Now get this garlande luſtie folke of age;

Now win who maie ye luſtie folke of youth,
This garlande freſh, of flouris red and white,
Purple and blewe, and colours fell uncouth,
And I ſhall croune hym kyng of all delite.
In all the Courte there was not to my ſight
A lovir true that he ne was adrede
When he expreſſe hath herd the ſtatute rede.

The XVII. ſtatute, when age approcheth on,
And luſt is laied, and all the fire is queint,
As freſhly then thou ſhalt begin to fonne
And dote in love, and all her image paint
In thy remembraunce till thou gin to faint,
As in the firſt ſeſon thyne herte began,
And her deſire, though thou ne maie ne can

Performe thy livyng actuell and luſt.
Regiſtir this in thyne rememberaunce
Eke, when thou maiſt not kepe thy thing from ruſt
Yet ſpeke and talke of pleſaunt daliaunce,
For that ſhall make thyne hert rejoyce and daunce;
And when thou maieſt no more the game aſſaie
The ſtatute bidde the praie for them that maie.

The XVIII. ſtatute wholy to commende
To pleſe thy ladie is, that thou eſchewe
With ſluttiſhneſſe thy ſelf for to offende;
Be joliſe, freſhe, and fete with thingis newe,
Courtlie with manir, this is all thy due,
Gentill of porte, and lovyng clenlineſſe;
This is the thing that likith thy maiſtreſſe;

And not to wandir liche a dullid aſſe,
Raggid and torne, diſguiſid in araie,
Ribaude in ſpeche, or out of meſure paſſe,
Thy bounde excedyng; thinke on this alwaie,
For *Women ben of tendir hertis aye,*
And lightly ſet ther pleſure in a place,
When thei miſthinke they lightly let it paſſe.

The XIX. ſtatute mete and drinke forgete,
Eche othir daie ſe that thou faſt for love,
For in the Courte thei live withoutin mete,
Save ſoche as cometh from Venus al above;
Thei take none hede in pain of grete reprove
Of mete and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
Onely thei live by ſight of ther ſoveraine.

The XX. ſtatute, laſt of everichone,
Enrolle it in thyne hert'is privite,
To wring and waile, to turne, and ſigh, and grone,
When that thy ladie abſent is from the,
And eke renewe the wordis all that ſhe
Betwene you twain hath ſaid, and all the chere
That ſhe hath made thy liv'is lady dere.

And ſe thyne herte in quiete ne in reſt
Sojourne to tyme thou ſeen thy ladie efte,
But where ſhe won, by ſouth, or eſt, or weſt,
With all thy force now ſe it be not lefte;
Be diligent till tyme thy life be reſte
In that thou maieſt thy ladie for to ſe;
This ſtatute was of old antiquite.

An officir of high aucthorite,
Yclepid Rigour, made us ſwere anone;
He n'as corrupt with parcialite,
Favour, prayir, ne gold that clerely ſhone.
Ye ſhall (quod he) now ſwerin here echone,
Both yong and old, to kepe in that thei maie
The ſtatutes truely all aftir this daie.

O God! thought I, hard is to make this othe,
But to my powir ſhall I them obſerve:
In all this worlde n'as mattir halfe ſo lothe
To ſwere for all, for though my body ſterve
I have no might them wholy to obſerve.
But herkin now the cace how it befell;
Aftir my othe was made, the trothe to tell,

I tournid levis, lokyng on this boke,
Where othir ſtatutes were of women ſhene,
And right forthwith Rigour on me gan loke
Full angirly, and ſaied unto the quene
I traitour was, and chargid me let ben;
There maie no man (quod he) the ſtatute knowe
That long to woman, hie degre ne lowe.

In ſecrete wiſe thei keptin ben full cloſe,
Thei ſoune echone to libertie, my frende;
Pleſaunt thei be, and to ther own purpoſe;
There wote no wight of them but God and ſende,
Ne naught ſhall witte unto the world'is ende;
The quene hath yeve me charge, in pain to die,
Nevir to rede ne ſeen them with myne eye: 53

For men ſhall not ſo nere of counſaill ben
With womanhode, ne knowin of ther guiſe,
Ne what thei think, ne of ther wit th' engine;
I me report to Salomon the wiſe,
And mightie Sampſon which begilid thriſe
With Dalila was, he wot that in a throwe
There maie no man ſtatute of women knowe; 54

For it pera'venture maie right ſo befall
That thei be bounde by Nature to diſceve,
And ſpinne and wepe, and ſugre ſtrew on gal,
The herte of man to raviſhe and to reve,
And whet ther tonge as ſharpe as ſwerde or gleve;
It maie betide this is ther ordinaunce,
So muſt thei lowlie doen ther obſervaunce, 44

And kepe the ſtatute yevin them of Kinde,
Of ſoche as Love hath yeve 'hem in ther life;
Men maie not wete why turnith every wind,
Nor waxin wiſe, nor ben inquiſitiſe
To knowe ſecrete of maide, widowe, or wife,
For thei ther ſtatutes have to them reſerved,
And nevir man to knowe them hath deſerved. 55

Now dresse you forth, the god of Love you guide,
Quod Rigour then, and seke the temple bright
Of Citherea, goddes here beside;
Beseche her by the influence and might
Of all her vertue you to teche aright
How for to serve your ladies and to plese,
Ye that ben sped, and set your herte in ese;

And ye that ben unpurveied pray her eke
Comforte you sone with grace and destinie,
That ye may set your hert there ye maie like,
In soche a place that it to Love maie be
Honour, and worship, and felicitie,
To you for aie. Now goeth by one assent.
Graunt mercie, Sir! (quod we) and forth we went

Devoutly, soft and esie pace, to se
Venus the goddes image all of golde,
And there we found a thousand on ther kne,
Some freshe and faire, some dedly to beholde,
In sondrie mantils new, and some wer olde,
Some paintid were with flamis red as fire,
Outward to shewe ther inward hote desire.

With dolefull chere, full fele in ther complaint,
Cried, "Ladie Venus! rewe upon our sore;
"Receve our billes, with teris all bedreint,
"We maie not wepe, there is no more in store,
"But wo and pain us frettith more and more;
"Thou blissefull planet! lovirs sterre so shene,
"Have routh on us that sigh, and careful ben;

" And punishe, ladie, grevously, we praie,
" The false untrue with counterfeite plesaunce
" That made ther othe be true to live or deie,
" With chere assurid and with countinaunce,
" And falsly now thei fotin Lov'is daunce
" Barain of routh, untrue of that thei saied,
" Now that ther lust and plesure is alaid.

" Yet efte againe a thousande milion,
" Rejoysyng love, ledyng ther life in blisse,
" Thei said, Venus, redresse of all division,
" Goddes eternell, thy name heryed is,
" By lovirs bonde is knit all thing iwis,
" Best unto best, the yerth to watir wanne,
" Birde unto birde, and woman unto man.

" This is the life of joye that we ben in,
" Resemblyng life of hevenly paradise;
" Love is exilir aie of vice and sinne,
" Love makith hert'is lustie to devise;
" Honour and grace have thei in every wise
" That ben to Lov'is lawe obedient;
" Love makith folke benigne and diligent,

" Aie steryng them to dredin vice and shame;
" In ther degre it maketh them honourable,
" And swete it is of Love to bere the name,
" So that his love be faithfull, true, and stable;
" Love prunith hym to semin amiable,
" Love hath no faute there it is exercised
" But sole with them that have all love dispised.

"Honour to the, celestiall and clere
"Goddes of Love, and to thy celsitude,
"That yevest us light so ferre doune from thy spere,
"Persyng our hertis with thy pulchritude;
"Comparison none of similitude
"Maie to thy grace be made in no degre,
"That hast us set with Love in unitie.

"Grete cause have we to praise thy name and the,
"For thorough the we live in joye and blisse;
"Blessid be thou, moste sovèraine to se!
"Thy holy Courte of gladnesse maie not misse;
"A thousande sith we maie rejoyce in this,
"That we ben thine with herte and all yfere,
"Enflamid with thy grace and hevenly fere."

Musyng of tho that spakin in this wise
I me bethought in my rememberaunce
Myne orison right godely to devise,
And plesauntly with hert'is obeisaunce
Beseche the goddes voidin my grevaunce,
For I loved eke, saufe that I wist no where,
Yet doun I set, and saied as ye shall here:

Fairist of all that evir were or be,
Licour and light to pensife creäture,
Myne whole affiaunce and my ladie fre,
My goddes bright, my fortune, and my ure!
I yeve and yelde my herte to the full sure,
Humbly besechyng, ladie, of thy grace
Me to bestowin in some blessid place.

And here I vowe me faithfull, true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilitie,
Humbly to ſerve while I have wit and mind,
Myne whole affiaunce and my ladie fre,
In thilkè place there ye me ſigne to be;
And ſith this thing of newe is yeve me, aie
To love and ſerve nedely muſt I obeie.

Be merciable with thy fire of grace,
And fixe myne herte there beautie is and routh,
For hote I love; determine in no place,
Saufe only this, by God and by my trouth
Troublid I was with ſlombir, ſlepe, and ſlouth,
This othir night, and in a viſioun
I ſe a woman romin up and doune

Of mene ſtature, and ſemely to beholde,
Luſtie and and freſhe, demure of countinaunce,
Yong and well ſhap, with here that ſhone as golde,
With eyen as criſtall, fercid with pleſaunce,
And ſhe gan ſtirre mine herte a lite to daunce,
But ſodainlie ſhe vaniſhe gan right there;
Thus I maie ſaie I love and wote not where.

For what ſhe is ne her dwellyng I n'ot,
And yet I fele that love diſtreinith me,
Might iche her knowe, that would I faine God wot,
Serve and obeye with all benignitie,
And if that othir be my deſtinie,
So that no wiſe I ſhall her nevir ſe,
Then graunt me her that beſt maie likin me,

With glad rejoyce to live in perfite hele,
Devoide of wrathe, repent, or variaunce,
And able me to doe that maie be wele
Unto my ladie with herte's hie pleſaunce;
And, mightie goddes! through thy purviaunce
My wit, my thought, my luſt, and love, ſo guide
That to thine honour I maie me provide

To ſet mine hert in place there I maie like,
And gladly ſerve with all affeccion;
Grete is the pain which at mine hert doth ſticke
Till I be ſped by thyne eleccion;
Helpe, ladie goddes! that poſſeſſion
I might of her have that in all my life
I clepin ſhall my quene and hert'is wife;

And in The *Courte of Love* to dwell for aie
My will is, and doin the ſacrifice,
Daily with Diane eke to fight and fraie,
And holdin werre, as might will me ſuffice;
That goddes chaſte I kepin in no wiſe
To ſerve; a figge for all her chaſtite!
Her lawe is for religiouſite.

And thus gan finiſhe prayir, laude, and preice,
Whiche that I yove to Venus on my kne,
And in myne herte to pondir and to peice
I gane anone her image freſhe beautie;
Heile to that figure ſwete, and heile to the,
Cupide! (quod I) and roſe and yede my weie;
And in the temple as I yede I ſeie

A ſhrine ſurmountyng all in ſtonis riche,
Of whiche the force was pleſaunce to mine eye,
With diamonde or ſaphire nevir liche
I have none ſeen, ne wrought ſo wondirlie;
So when I met with Philobône in hie
I gan demaunde whoſe is this ſepulture?
Forſothe, (quod ſhe) a tendir creäture

Is ſhrinid there, and Pitie is her name;
She ſawe an egle wreke hym on a flie,
And plucke his wing, and eke him, in his game,
And tendir herte of that hath made her die;
Eke ſhe would wepe and mourne right pitouſly
To ſeen a lovir ſuffre grete deſtreſſe;
In all the Courte n'as none, as I do geſſe,

That coud a lovir half ſo well availe,
Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
Aſkin, for he was ſure withoutin faile
That of his grief ſhe coud the hete aſwage;
In ſtede of Pitie ſpedith hote Corage
The mattirs all of Courte; now ſhe is dedde
I me reporte in this to womanhedde;

Forweile, and wepe, and crie, and ſpeke, and praie,
Women would not have pitie on thy plaint,
Ne by that mene to eſe thine herte convaie,
But the recevin for ther owne talent,
And ſaie that Pitie cauſith them conſent
Of reuth to take thy ſervice and thy paine,
In that thou maieſt, to pleſe thy ſovèraine.

But this is counsaill, kepe it secretly,
(Quod she;) I n'olde for all the worlde about
The quene of Love it wist; and witte ye why?
For if by me this mattir springin out
In Courte no lengir should I out of doubt
Dwellin, but shame in all my life endry:
Now kepe it close (quod she) this hardily.

Well, all is well: now shall ye seen, she saied,
The fairist ladie undir sonne that is:
Come on with me; demene you lich a maide
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speke ywis
With her that is the mirrour, joie, and blisse,
But somwhat straunge and sad of her demene
She is: beware your countinaunce be sene,

Nor ovirlight, ne rechelesse, ne to bolde,
Ne malapert, ne rennyng with your tong,
For she will you obeisin and beholde,
And you demaunde why ye wer hens so long
Out of this Courte, without resort emong;
And Rosiall her name is hote aright,
Whose herte is yet yyevin to no wight.

And ye also ben, as I undirstonde,
With Love but light avauncid by your worde;
Might ye by hap your fredom makin bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wele accorde,
Well might ye thanke the god of Love and lord,
For she that ye sawe in your dreme appere
To love soche one what are thei then the nere?

Yet wote ye what? as my rememberaunce
Me yevith nowe, ye faine where that ye saie
That ye with Love had nevir acquaintaunce
Save in your dreme right late this othir daie;
Why, yes parde, my life that durst I laie
That ye were caught upon an heth when I
Sawe you complain and sigh full pitously;

Within an herbir and a gardein faire,
Where flowirs growe and herbis vertuous,
Of whiche the savour swete was and the eire,
There were your self full hote and amorous;
Ywis ye ben to nice and daungirous;
I would ye now repent and love some newe.
Naie, by my trothe, I saied, I nevir knewe

The godely wight whose I shal be for aye,
Guide me the Lorde, that love hath made and me:
But forthe we went into a chambre gaie
There was Rosiall, womanly to se,
Whose stremis, sotill persyng of her eye,
Mine hert gan thrill for beautie in the stounde;
Alas (quod I) who hath me yeve this wounde!

And then I drede to speke, till at the laste
I grete the ladie reverently and wele,
When that my sigh was gone and ovirpaste,
And doune on knees full humbly gan I knele,
Besechyng her my fervent wo to kele,
For there I toke full purpose in my mynde
Unto her grace my painfull herte to bynde.

For if I ſhall all fully her diſcrive
Her hed was rounde by compaſſe of Nature,
Her here as gold, ſhe paſſid all on live,
And lillie forehed had this creäture,
With liveliſhe browis, flawe of colour pure,
Betwene the which was mene diſſeveraunce,
From every browe to ſhewin a diſtaunce;

Her noſe directid ſtreight, and even as line,
With forme and ſhape thereto convenient,
In which the godis milkewhite path doth ſhine,
And eke her eyen ben bright and orient
As is the ſmaragde, unto my judgement,
Or yet theſe ſterris hevenly ſmall and bright,
Her viſage is of lovely rede and white;

Her mouthe is ſhort, and ſhitte in litil ſpace,
Flamyng ſomdele, not ovir redde I mene,
With pregnaunt lips, and thicke to kiſſe percace,
For lippis thinne, not fat, but evir lene,
They ſerve of naught, they be not worth a bene,
For if the baſſe ben full there is delite;
Maximian truely thus doeth he write.

But to my purpoſe; I ſaie white as ſnowe
Ben all her tethe, and in ordir thei ſtonde
Of one ſtature, and eke her breth I trowe
Surmountith all odours that er I founde
In ſweteneſſe, and her body, face, and honde,
Ben ſharply ſlendir, ſo that from the hedde
Unto the fote all is but womanhedde.

I holde my pece of othir thingis hidde;
Here ſhal my ſoule and not my tong bewraie;
But how ſhe was arraied, if ye me bidde,
That ſhall I well diſcovir you and ſaie;
A bende of gold and ſilke full freſhe and gaie,
With her intreſſe ybroudirid full wele,
Right ſmothly kept, and ſhinyng every dele;

About her necke a flower of freſhe deviſe,
With rubies ſet that luſtie were to ſene,
And ſhe in goune was light and ſommir wiſe,
Shapin full wele, the colour was of grene,
With aureat ſent aboute her ſidis clene,
With divers ſtonis precious and riche;
Thus was ſhe raied, yet ſawe I ner her liche:

For if that Jove had this ladie yſeine,
Tho the faire Caliſto ne Alcmena
Thei nevir haddin in his armis leine,
Ne he had lovid the faire Europa,
Ye, ne yet Danae ne Antiopa,
For all ther beautie ſtode in Roſiall;
She ſemid lich a thyng celeſtiall,

In bountie, favour, porte, and ſimilineſſe,
Pleſaunt of figure, mirrour of delite,
Gracious to ſeen, rote of all gentilneſſe,
With angell viſage, luſtie, redde, and white;
There was not lack, ſaufe Daungir had alite
This godely freſhe in rule and govirnaunce,
And ſomdele ſtraunge ſhe was for her pleſaunce.

And truly sone I toke my leve and went
When she had me enquirid what I was,
For more and more impressin gan the dent
Of Lov'is darte while I behelde her face,
And efte againe I come to sekin grace,
And up I put my bill with sentence clere
That foloweth aftir; rede, and ye shall here:

O, ye freshe lovelie! of beautie the rote,
That Nature hath formid so wele, and made
Princes and quene, and ye that maie do bote
Of all my langoure with your wordis glad,
Ye woundid me, ye made me wo bestad;
Of grace redresse my mortall grefe, as ye
Of all my harme the very caucir be.

Now am I caught, and unware sodainly,
With persaunt stremis of your eyin clere,
Subjecte to ben and servin you mekely,
And all your man, ywis, my ladie dere!
Abidyng grace, of whiche I you requere,
That mercilesse ye cause me not to sterve,
But guerdon me liche as I maie deserve:

For by my trothe the dayis of my breth
I am and will be your in will and herte,
Pacient and meke for you to suffir deth
If it require; now rue upon my my smerte;
And this I swere, I nevir shall out sterte
From Lov'is Courte for none adversitie,
So ye would rue on my distresse and me.

My deſtinie, my fate, and houre, I bliſſe,
That have me ſet to ben obedient
Onely to you, the floure of all ywis;
I truſt to Venus nevir to repent,
For evir redy, glad, and diligent,
Ye ſhall me finde in ſervice to your grace
Till deth my life out of my bodie raſe.

Humble unto your excellence ſo digne,
Enforcing aye my wittis and delite
To ſerve and pleſe with glad herte and benigne,
And ben as Troïlus, Troie's worthie knight,
Or Antonie for Cleopatra bright,
And nevir you me thinkis to renay;
Thus ſhall I kepe unto myne endyng day.

Enprint my ſpeche in your memoriall
Sadly, my princes, ſalve of all my ſore!
And thinke that for I would becomin thrall,
And ben your owne, as I have ſaied before,
Ye muſt of pitie cheriſhe more and more
Your man, and tendir aftir his deſerte,
And give hym corage for to ben experte:

For where that one hath ſet his herte on fire,
And findith neithir refute ne pleſaunce,
Ne worde of comforte, Deth will quite his hire;
Alas that there ne is none allegaunce
Of all ther wo! alas the grete grevaunce
To love unloved! but ye, my ladie dere!
In other wiſe maie governe this matere.

Truly gramercie, frende! of your gode will,
And of your profir in your humble wiſe,
But for your ſervice take and kepe it ſtill:
And wher ye ſaie I ought you well to' cheriſhe,
And of your grefe the remedie deviſe,
I knowe not why; I n'am acquaintid well
With you, ne wote not ſothly where ye dwell.

In art of love I write and ſongis make,
That maie be ſong in honour of the kyng
And quene of Love, and then I undirtake
He that is ſadde ſhall then full mery ſyng,
And daungirous not ben in every thyng:
Beſeche I you but ſeen my will and rede,
And let your anſwere put me out of drede.

What is your name? reherſe it here I praie;
Of whens and where, of what condicion,
That ye ben of: let ſe; come of and ſaie;
Faine would I knowe your diſpoſicion:
Ye have put on your old entencion,
But whate ye mene to ſerve me I ne wote,
Saufe that ye ſaie ye love me woundir hote.

My name, alas my herte! why makes thou ſtraunge?
Philogenet I cal'd am ferre and nere,
Of Cambrige clerke, that nevir thinke to chaunge
Fro you, that with your hevenly ſtremis clere
Raviſhe myne herte and ghoſt, and all in fere:
Since at the firſt I write my bill for grace
Me thinke I ſe ſome mercie in your face.

And what I mene, by God that al hath wrought,
My bille now makith finall mencion,
That ye ben ladie in myne inward thought
Of all myne herte withoutin offencion,
That I beſte love, and have ſith I begon
To drawe to Courte; lo then what might I ſaie?
I yelde me here unto your high nobleye; 924

And if that I offende, or wilfully
By pompe of herte your precept diſobaie,
Or doen againe your wille unſkilfully,
Or grevin you for erneſt or for plaie,
Correcte ye me right ſharply then I praie,
As it is ſeen unto your womanhede,
And rewe on me, or els I n'am but dede. 931

Naie, God forbede to feffe you ſo with grace,
And for a word of ſugrid eloquence
To have compaſſion in ſo lityl ſpace!
Then were it tyme that ſome of us wer hens;
Ye ſhall not finde in me ſoche inſolence:
Aye, what is this! maie ye not ſuffre ſight?
How maie ye loke upon the candill light, 938

That clere is and hottir then is myne eye?
And yet ye ſaied the bemis perſe and frete,
How ſhall ye then the candill light endrie?
For well wotte ye that hath the ſharpir hete:
And there ye bidde me you correct and bete
If ye offende: naie, that maie not be doen;
There come but few that ſpedin here ſo ſone. 945

Withdrawe your eye, withdrawe from presens eke;
Hurte not your self through foly with a loke;
I would be sory so to make you sicke;
A woman should beware eke whom she toke:
Ye beth a clerke, go serchin wel my boke
If any women ben so light to winne:
Naie'; abide a while tho ye were all my kinne;

So sone ye maie not win myne hert in truth;
The guise of Court will seen your stedfastnesse,
And as you doen to have upon you reuth;
Your owne deserte and lowly gentilnesse
That will reward you joye for hevinesse,
And tho ye waxin pale, and grene, and dede,
Ye muste it use a while withoutin drede,

And it accept, and grutchin in no wise:
But whereas ye me hastily desire
To bene to love, me thinke ye be not wise;
Cese of your language, cese I you requere,
For he that hath this xx yere bene here
May nat optaine; than marvaile I that ye
Be now so bold of love to trete with me.

A, mercy, hert! my lady and my love,
My rightwise princesse and my lyv'is guide!
Nowe may I plein to Venus al above
That routhles ye me gave this wounde so wide:
What have I done? why may it not betide
That for my trouthe I may recevid be?
Alas than your daungir and cruiltie!

In woful houre I gote was, welawey!
In woful hour foſtirid and yfedde,
In woful hour yborne, that I ne may
My ſuplicacion ſwetely have yſpedde;
The froſty grave and cold muſte be my bedde
Withoute ye liſt your grace and mercy ſhewe,
Death with his axe ſo faſte on me doth hewe.

So grete diſeſe and in ſo litil while,
So litil joy that felte I nevir yet,
And at my wo Fortune ginnith to ſmyle,
That nevir erſt I felte ſo harde a fitte;
Confoundid ben my ſpirites and my witte
Til that my lady take me to her cure
Whiche I love beſte of erthely creäture.

But that I like that may I not come by,
Of that I plain that have I habondaunce;
Sorowe and thought they ſit me wondir nye;
Me is withhold that might be my pleſaunce;
Yet turne again my worldly ſuffiſaunce,
O lady bright! and ſauſe your faithful true,
And or I die yet ones upon me rewe.

With that I fell in ſounde and dede as ſtone,
With coloure ſlaine and wanne as aſhè pale,
And by the hande ſhe caught me up anon;
Ariſe! (quod ſhe) what, have ye dronkin dwale?
Why ſlepin ye? it is no nitirtale.
Now mercy, ſwete! (quod I) iwis affraied.
What thing (quod ſhe) hath made you ſo diſmaied?

Now wote I wel that ye a lovir be,
Your hew is witneſſe in this thing, ſhe ſaid;
Yf ye were ſecret ye might knowe (quod ſhe)
Curteiſe and kinde all this ſhuld be aleide;
And now, myne herte! al that I have miſſeid
I ſhal amend, and ſet your herte in eſe.
That worde it is (quod I) that doth me pleſe. 1008

But this I charge, that ye the ſtentis kepe,
And breke them not for ſloth nor ignoraunce;
With that ſhe gan to ſmile and laughin depe.
Ywis (quod I) I will do your pleſaunce;
The xvi ſtatute doth me grete grevaunce,
But ye muſt that releſſe or modifie.
I graunte, (quod ſhe) and ſo I wil truly. 1015

And ſoftely than her coloure gan appeire
As roſe ſo red throughout her viſage al,
Wherfore me thinke that it 'is according here
That ſhe of right be clepid Roſial.
Thus have I wonne with wordis gret and ſmal
Some godely worde of her that I love beſt,
And truſt ſhe ſhall yet ſette mine herte in reſt. 1022

Goth on, ſhe ſaid to Philobone, and take
This man with you, and lede him al aboute
Within the Courte, and ſhewe him for my ſake
What lovirs dwel within, and al the route
Of officirs, for he is oute of doute
A ſtraungir yet. Come on, (quod Philobone)
Philogenet, with me nowe muſt ye gon. 1029

And ſtalking ſofte with eſy pace I ſawe
Aboute the king yſtondin environ
Attendaunce, Diligence, and ther felow
Forthirir Aſperaunce, and many one,
Dred to offende there ſtode, and not alone,
For there was eke the cruil adverſarye,
The lovirs fo, that cleped is Diſpleſure, 1036

Whiche unto me ſpake angrily and felle,
And ſaid, My lady me diſſevin ſhall;
Troweſt thou (quod ſhe) that al that ſhe did tell
Is true? nay, nay, but undir hony gall
Thy birth and hers thei be nothing egal;
Caſte of thine herte for all her wordis white,
For gode faith ſhe lovith the but alite; 1043

And eke remembre thine habilite
May not compare with her, this wel thou wot.
Ye, than came Hope, and ſaid, My frende, let be,
Beleve him not; Diſpaire he ginnith dote.
Alas, (quod I) here is both cold and hote!
The tone me biddith love, the todir nay,
Thus wote I not what me is beſt to ſay; 1050

But wel wote I my lady grauntid me
Truly to be my wound'is remedy;
Her gentilneſſe may not infectid be
With doubleneſſe, thus truſt I til I die;
So caſt I voide Diſpairis company,
And takin Hope to council and to frende.
Yea, kepe that wel (quod Philobone) in minde. 1057

And there beside, within a bay windowe,
Stod one in grene ful large of bred and length,
His berd as black as fethirs of the crow,
His name was Lust, of woundir might and strength,
And with Delite to argue there he thinkth,
For this was alway his opinion
That love was sinne, and so he hath begonne 1064

To reson faste, and ledge auctorite.
Nay, (quod Delite) Love is a vertue clere,
And from the soule his progresse holdith he;
Blinde appetite of Lust doth oftin stere,
And that is sinne, for reson lackith there,
For thou doest think thy neighbour's wife to winne,
Yet thinke it wel that love may not be sinne: 1071

For God and seint they love right verily,
Voide of al synne and vise, this know I well;
Affeccion of fleshe is sinne truly,
But verray love is vertue, as I fele,
For verray love may freile desire ackele,
For love is love withoutin any sinne. 1077
Nowe stint, (quod Luste) thou spekest not worth a pinne.

And there I left them in ther arguing,
Roming ferthir into the castil wide,
And in a cornir Lier stode talking
Of lesings fast with Flatery there beside;
He said that women were attire of pride,
And men were founde of nature variaunte,
And coulde be false and shewin beau semblaunt. 1085

Than Flatiry bespake, and said, Iwis,
Se, so she goth on patins faire and fete,
It doth right well; what pretty man is this
That romith here? now truly drink ne mete
Nede I not have, mine herte for joye doth bete
Him to beholde, so is he godely freshe,
It semeth for love his herte is tendre' and nesshe. 1092

This is the Courte of lusty folke and glad,
And wel becometh ther abite and arraye;
O! why be som so sory and so sadde,
Complaining thus in blak, and white, and gray?
Freris they ben and monkis in gode say:
Alas for routh! gret dole it is to sene
To se them thus bewaile and sory bene. 1099

Se how they crie and wring ther handis whit
For they so sone went to religion,
And eke the nonnes with vail and wimple plight
Ther thought that they ben in confusion:
Alas! they sain we fain perfeccion
In clothis wide and lacke our libertie,
But al the sinne mote on our frendis be: 1106

For Venus wote we wold as faine as ye,
That bene attirid here and wel besene,
Desyrin man, and love in our degre
Ferme and faithful, right as ywold the quene:
Our frendis wicke, in tendir youth and grene,
Ayenst our will made us religious,
That is the cause we mourne and wailin thus. 1113

Then saide the monke and freris in the tide,
Wel may we curse our abbis and our place,
Our statutes sharpe to sing in copis wide,
Chastely to kepe us oute of Lov'is grace,
And nevir to fele comforte ne solace,
Yet suffre we the hete of Lovis fire,
And aftir othir happly we desire.

O Fortune coursid! why nowe and wherfore
Hast thou, they said, berafte us libertie,
Sithe Nature yave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovirs be?
Why mot we suffer soche adversite
Diane to serve and Venus to refuse?
Ful oftin sythe this matier doth us muse.

We serve and honour sore ayenste our will
Of Chastite the goddes and the quene;
Us lefir were with Venus bidin stil,
And have reward for Love, and soget bene
Unto these women courtely, freshe and shene.
Fortune! we curse thy whele of variaunce,
Ther we were wel thou revist our plesaunce.

Thus leve I them with voice of plaint and care
In raging wo criyng ful pitously;
And as I yede ful nakid and ful bare
Some I beholde loking dispiteously,
On Povirte that dedly cast ther eye,
And Welaway they cried, and were not faine,
For they ne might ther glad desire attaine,

For lacke of richeſſe worldly and of gode
They banne, and curſe, and wepe, and ſain Alas!
That poverte' hath us hent that whilom ſtode
At hert'is eſe, and fre, and in gode caſe,
But now we dare not ſhew our ſelfe in place,
Ne us embolde to dwel in company
There as our hert wold love right faithfully. 1148

And yet againewarde ſhrikid every nonne,
The pange of love ſo ſtrainith them to crie;
Now wo the time (quod they) that we be boun!
This hateful ordre niſe wil doen us die,
We ſigh and ſobbe, and bleding inwardly,
Freting our ſelfe with thought and hard complaint,
That nye for love we waxin wode and faint. 1155

And as I ſtode beholding here and there
I was ware of a ſorte ful languiſhing,
Savage and wilde of loking and of chere,
Ther manteilles and ther clothis ey tering,
And ofte they were of Nature complaining,
For they ther membirs lackid fote and hand,
With viſage wry, and blinde I undirſtand. 1162

They lackid ſhap and beautie to preferre
Them ſelf in love, and ſaid that God and Kind
Hath forgid them to worſhippin the ſterre
Venus the bright, and leftin al behinde
His othir werkis clene and oute of minde,
For othir have ther full ſhappe and beautie,
And we (quod they) ben in deformite. 1169

And nye to them there was a company
That have the Suſtirs waried and miſſaide,
I mene the thre of fatall Deſtine,
That be our werdis; ſodenly abraide
Oute gan they crie as they had ben affraied,
We curſe (quod they) that evir hath Nature
Yformid us this wofull life to' endure.

And there he was contrite and gan repent,
Confeſſing whole the wounde that Cithere
Hath with the darte of hote deſire him ſent,
And howe that he to Love muſte ſubject be,
Than held he al his ſkornis vanite,
And ſaid that lovirs lede a bliſſid life,
Yong men and olde, and widowe, maid, and wife.

Bereve me, goddeſſe, (quod he) of thy might
My ſkornis al and ſkoffis that I have,
No powir for to mockin any wight
That in thy ſervice dwel, for I did rave,
This knowe I wel right now, ſo God me ſave,
And I ſhal be the chief poſt of thy faith,
And love uphold, the revers who ſo faith.

Diſſemble ſtode not ferre from him in trouth,
With party mantil, party hode and hoſe,
And ſaid he had upon his lady routh,
And thus he wound him in and gan to gloſe,
Of his entent full double I ſuppoſe,
And al the worlde he ſaid he loved it wele,
But ay me thought he loved her nere adele.

Eke *Shamefaſteneſſe* was there, as I toke hede,
That bluſhid rede, and darſt nat ben aknowe
She lovir was, for therof had ſhe drede;
She ſtode and hing her viſage downe alowe,
But ſoche a ſight it was to ſene I trowe
As of theſe roſis rody on ther ſtalke,
Ther coud no wight her ſpy to ſpeke or talke. 1204

In Lov'is arte ſo gan ſhe to abaſhe,
Ne durſt not uttir al her privite,
Many a ſtripe and many' a grevouſe laſhe
She gave to them that woldin lovirs be,
And hindered ſore the ſimple comi'naltie,
That in no wiſe durſt grace and mercie crave,
For were not ſhe they nede but aſke and have; 1211

Where yf they now aprochin for to ſpeke,
Than *Shamefaſtneſſe* returnith them again,
They thinke if we our ſecret counſel breke
Our ladies wil have ſcorne on us certein,
And peravinture thinkin grete diſdain;
Thus *Shamefaſtneſſe* may bringin in Diſpeire;
When ſhe is dede the todir will be heire. 1218

Come forth Avauntir, now I ring thy bel;
I ſpied him ſone to God I make a vowe;
He lokid black as fendis doth in hell.
The firſte (quod he) that evir did I wowe
Within a worde ſhe come, I wotte not how,
So that in armis was my lady fre,
And ſo hath ben a thouſande mo than ſhe 1225

In England, Britain, Spain, and Picardie,
Artois, and Fraunce, and up in Hie Holande,
In Burgoine, Naples, and in Italye,
Navarre, and Grece, and up in Hethin lond;
Was nevir woman yet that wolde withstond
To ben at commaundèment whan I wolde;
I lackid neithir silver coigne ne gold: 1232

And there I met with this estate and that,
And here I brochid her, and here, I trowe:
Lo! there goeth one of myn; and wotte ye what?
Yon freshe attirid have I leide ful lowe;
And soche one yondir eke right wel I knowe;
I kepte the statute whan we lay isere, 1238
And yet yon same hath made me right gode chere.

Thus hath Avauntir blowin every where
Al that he knoweth, and more a thousande fold;
His auncistrie of kinne was to Lier,
For firste he makith promise for to hold
His ladis council, and it not unfolde,
Wherfore the secrete when he doth unshitte
Than lyith he that all the worlde maye witte. 1246

For falsing so his promise and beheste
I wondir sore he hath soche fantasie;
He lackith witte I trowe or is a beste,
That can no bette himselfe with reson guy;
By mine advice Love shall be contrarie
To his availe, and him eke dishonoure,
So that in Courte he shall no more sojoure. 1253

Take hede (quod ſhe this litil Philobone)
Where Envie rockith in the cornir yonde,
And ſittith derke, and ye ſhal ſe anone
His lene bodie, his fading face and honde;
Him ſelf he frettith, as I undirſtonde,
Witneſſe of Ovide Metamorphoſoſe;
The lovir's fo he is, I will not gloſe:

For where a lovir thinkith him promote
Envie wil grutche, repining at his wele;
It ſwellith ſore about his hertis rote,
That in no wiſe he canne not live in hele;
And if the faithful to his lady ſtele
Envie will noiſe and ringe it rounde aboute,
And ſey moch worſe than done is out of doute.

And Privie Thought, rejoyſing of him ſelfe,
Stode not ferre thens in abite mervilous;
Yon is, thought I, ſome ſpirite or ſome elfe,
His ſotil image is ſo curious;
How is (quod I) that he is ſhadid thus
With yondir cloth, I n'ot of what coloure?
And nere I went, and gan to lere and pore,

And frainid him a queſtion ful harde;
Whate is (quod I) the thing thou loviſt beſte,
Or what is bote unto thy painis harde?
Me thinke thou liviſt here in gret unreſt,
Thou wandriſt aye from ſouth to eſt and weſt,
And eſt to northe: as ferre as I canne ſe
There is no place in Court may holdin the.

Whom foloweſt thou? wher is thy hert iſet?
But my demaunde aſoile I the require.
Me thought (quod he) no creäture may let
Me to ben here and where as I deſire,
For whare as Abſence hath done out the fire
My mery thought it kindeleth yet againe,
That bodily me thinke with my ſoveraine 1288

I ſtand, and ſpeke, and laugh, and kiſſe, and halſe,
So that my thought comfortith me ful oft;
I think, God wote, though al the world be falſe
I wil be true; I thinke alſo howe ſofte
My lady is in ſpeche, and this on loft
Bringith mine herte with joie and gret gladneſſe,
This privey thought alaieth mine hevineſſe. 1295

And whate I thinke or where to be no man
In al this erthe can tel ywis but I,
And eke there n'is no ſwalow ſwift ne ſwan
So wight of wing, ne halfe ſo yerne can flie,
For I canne ben, and that right ſodenly,
In heven, in hell, in paradiſe, and here,
And with my lady whan I wil deſire. 1302

I am of counſel ferre and wide I wote
With lorde and lady, and ther privite
I wotte it al, and be it hote or colde
They ſhall not ſpeke without licence of me;
I myne in ſoche as ſeſonable be,
For firſte the thing is thought within the hert
Er any worde oute from the mouth aſterte. 1309

And with that word Thought bad farewel and yede;
Eke furthe went I to sene the Court'is guise,
And at the dore came in, so God me spede,
Twenty courteours of age and of assise,
Liche high and brode, and as I me advise
The Goldin Love and Ledin Love they hight,
The tone was sad, the t'odir glad and light. 1316

Yes, draw your hert with all your force and might
To lustinesse, and ben as ye have seid,
And thinke that I no drope of favour hight,
Ne ner had unto your desire obeide,
Til sodenly me thought me was affraied
To sene you waxe so dede of countinaunce,
And Pite bade me done you some plesaunce; 1323

Oute of her shrine she rose from deth to live,
And in mine ere ful privily she spake,
Doth not your servaunt hens away to drive,
Rosial, (quod she) and than mine hertè brake,
For tendiriche, and where I founde moch lacke
In your persone, then I my self bethought, 1329
And saide This is the man myne herte hath sought.

Gramercy! Pite, might I not suffice
To yeve due laude unto thy shrine of golde?
God wotte I wold, for sith that ye did rise
From deth to live for me I am behold
To thankin you a thousand tymis tolde,
And eke my lady Rosial the shene, 1336
Whiche hath in comforte set mine herte I wene.

And here I make myne proteſtacion,
And depely ſwere as mine powir to bene
Faithful, devoide of variacion,
And her forbere in angir or in tene,
And ſerviceable to my world'is quene
With al my reſon and intelligence,
To done her honour high and revèrence. 1344

I had not ſpoke ſo ſone the worde but ſhe
My ſovèrain did thanke me hertily,
And ſaid, Abide, ye ſhal dwelle ſtill with me
Till ſeſon come of May, for than truly
The king of Love and al his company
Shall holde his feſte ful rially and welle;
And there I bode til that the ſeſon felle. 1351

On May-day whan the lark began to ryſe
To matins went the luſty nightingal
Within a temple ſhapin hauthorn wiſe,
He might not ſlepe in all the nyghtirtale,
But *Domine labia* gan he crie and gale;
My lippis opin, lord of Love, I crie,
And let my mouth thy priſing now bewrye. 1358

The egle ſang *Venite* bodies al,
And let us joye to Love, that is oure helth,
And to the deſke anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he precid in by ſtelth,
Then ſaied the faucon, our owen hertis welth,
Domine Dominus noſter, I wote
Ye be the god that donne us brenne thus hote. 1365

Cæli enarrant, ſaid the popingay,
Your might is told in heven and firmament,
And then came in the goldfinche freſhe and gay,
And ſaied this pſalme with hertely glad intent,
Domini eſt terra, this Latin intent
The god of Love hath yerth in govirnaunce,
And than the wren gan ſcippin and to daunce; 1372

Jube Domine, O lorde of Love! I pray
Commaunde me wel this leſſon for to rede,
This legende is of al that woldin dye
Martirs for Love, God yef the ſoulis ſpede,
And to the Venus ſinge we oute of drede,
By influence of al thy vertue grete,
Beſeching the to kepe us in our hete. 1379

The ſeconde leſſon robin redebreſte ſang,
Hail to the god and goddes of our lay!
And to the lectorn amorily he ſprang,
Hail, (quod he) o thou freſhe ſeſon of May!
Our monith glad that ſingin on the ſpray,
Hail to the flouris rede, and white, and blewe,
Whiche by ther vertue makith our luſt new! 1386

The thirde leſſon the turtil dove toke up,
And therat lough the mavis in a ſcorne,
He ſaid, O God! as mote I dine or ſuppe
This foliſhe dove wil gife us al an horne,
There bin right here a M. bettir borne
To rede this leſſon, whiche as wel as he,
And eke as hote, can love in al degre. 1393

The turtil dove ſaid, Welcom, welcom May,
Gladſom and light to lovirs that ben trewe,
I thanke the lord of Love that doth purvey
For me to rede this leſſon al of dewe,
For in gode ſoth of corage I purſue
To ſerve my make tyll deth us muſt departe,
And than *Tu autem* ſang he al aparte.

Te Deum amoris ſang the thruſtil cocke,
Tuball him ſelf the firſte muſician
With key of armony coude not onlocke
So ſwete a tewne as that the thruſtil can,
The lorde of Love we praiſin (quod he) than,
And ſo done al the foulis gret and lite,
Honour we May in fals lovirs diſpite.

Dominus regnavit, ſaid the pecocke there,
The lord of Love, that mighty prince iwis,
He is recevid here and every where.
Nowe *Jubilate* ſang, what menith this?
Said than the lynet, *Welcom lord of bliſſe.*
Oute ſterte the owle with *Benedicite!*
What menith al this mery fare? (quod he)

Laudate ſang the larke with voice ful ſhril,
And eke the kight *O admirabile!*
This quire wil throw min eris pers and thril,
But what? welcom this May ſeſon (quod he)
And honoure to the lord of Love mote be,
That hath this feſte ſo ſolempne and ſo hie;
Amen ſaid al, and ſo ſaid eke the pie.

And forth the cockowe gan procede anon
With *Benedictus!* thanking God in haſt
That in this May wolde viſite them echon,
And gladdin them al while the feſt ſhal laſt,
And therwithal a laughtir oute he braſte,
I thanke it God that I ſhuld ende the ſong,
And al the ſervice whiche hath ben ſo long. 1428

Thus ſang they al the ſervice of the feſte,
And that was done right erly to my dome,
And furth goth al the Courte both moſt and leſt
To fetche the flouris freſh, and braunch, and blome,
And namely hauthorn brought both page and grome,
With freſh garlantis, party blew and white,
And than rejoyſin in ther grete delite. 1435

Eke eche at othir threwe the flouris bright,
The prymeroſe, the violete, and the gold,
So than as I beheld the roial ſight
My lady gan me ſodenly behold,
And with a trewe love plitid many' a folde
She ſmot me through the very herte as blive,
And Venus yet I thanke I am alive. 1442

Explicit.

THE REMEDIE OF LOVE.

This book, taken for the moſt part out of The Proverbs of Solomon, is a warning to take heed of the deceitful company of women.

THE PROLOGUE.

SEYNG the manyfolde inconvenience
Falling by unbrydlid proſperite,
Whiche is not temprid with moral prudence,
Nothing more welthie than in youth's frelte,
Moved I am bothe of right and equite
To youth'is wele ſomwhat for to endite
Whereby he may himſelfin ſafecondite.

And firſte I note as a thinge moſt noyous,
And unto youth a grevous malady,
Amongis us callid love encombrous,
Vexyng alway yonge peple ſtraungèly,
Oftin by force it cauſith 'hem to dye,
And age is alſo turmentid by love,
I mene bineth the girdle' and not above.

Wherfore this werke, whiche is right laborous,
For age me nedith nat in honde to take,
To youthe me owith to be' obſequious;
Nowe I begin thus to worke for his ſake,
Whiche may the fervencè of love aſlake,
To the lovir as a mitigative,
To him that is none a preſervative.

That mighty lorde whiche that me govirneth,
'Tis Youthe I mene, meſure if that I pace
In every matir whiche that him concerneth:
Firſt, as is behoveful, I wol aſke grace,
And forthwithal now in this ſamè place
Er I begin I wol yknèle and ſay
Theſe fewe wordis, and him of helpè praye:

Thou flouring Youth, whiche haſt the avauntage
In ſtrength of body, in luſte, and beaute,
Alſo a precelling haſte above Age
In many' a ſinguler commodite,
Howe be it one thing he hath beyonde the
To thy moſt profite and gretiſt availe,
Whiche ſhuld the conduit, I mene ſad counſaile.

And yet, gode lorde, of a preſumpcion
I n'il deprave thy might and deite,
I lyve but undir thy protection,
I am thy ſubjecte, I were thy lyverie,
For thou arte grounde of my proſperite,
And freſhiſt flowir of al my garlande,
My ſingu'ler aide, as I well undirſtande.

But as he that oweth his lorde beſt ſervice
And entire faithe, his honour to ſupporte,
Right ſo I ſpeke, and in none othir wiſe;
I knowlege my ſelf one of the leſt ſorte
Of thy ſervauntes, to our eldirs comforte,
Drawe ſadde counſaile unto the if thou liſte,
The and thy powir who maie then reſiſte?

Fie on Age, I ſay, undir wordis fewe,
And his erroneous opinion !
What ſpekiſt of him whiche ſaieth moſte untrue
All youth to be of ill diſpoſicion ?
Dampnith us all without excepcion,
And for a colerable avauntage
He ſaieth in hym reſtith all counſaill ſage.

Well ſothly maie ſadde counſaile in him reſt,
But yet his dedis ben full ferre therefro;
He maie wel ſayin with our pariſhe preſt,
Doith as I ſaie and not as I do;
For I my ſelfin know wele one or two
Well ſtrickin in age that for neighbourhedde
Ywollin to ther neighbours wivis bedde.

He will in preſence of the yongè man
Her clippe and kiſſe, ye, and her doune ylaie,
And to blere his eye thus he ſayith than,
O ſuffre yet olde Morell for to plaie,
Now have I doin that I can or maie :
Thus he ſayith her huſband for to queme,
That he nor no man ſhouldin not miſdeme.

In worde nor dede nedith him not be coie,
It' is impoſſible that he doe amiſſe :
If the yong man ſpeke, anon he ſaieth, Boie,
To rebuke age beſemeth the not iwis;
And thus his olde face aye his warrant is;
All is in hym but ſleight and ſubtilte,
And ferre from right reſon, I tellin the.

And, ſhortly, Age is not abovin me;
Age is impotent, and of no reſiſtence;
Age unweldie ne maie not fight nor fle;
What werin Age withoutin my defence?
Sad Counſaile ſaieſt, Givith hym aſſiſtence;
Right reſon is freſhiſt where that I ame,
Wherefore in thy ſaiyng thou art to blame.

Sith reſon to me is rathir accompanied
Then unto Age, whiche is the opinion
Of every wiſe man not to be denied,
And ſith ſad counſaile procedith of reſon,
Sad counſaile in me hath his chefe mancion;
This is no naie; but what than is the ende
Of this thy ſuaſion; what doeſt entende?

Age to compare unto thyne excellence
I n'ill preſume hym ſo to dignifie,
Ye be not egall, how be it Experience
Hym avauntageth, for ſhe moſte certainly
Hym techith what thing to hym is contrary,
And ofte to fore ſe 'and warily eſchewe,
Whiche thou nevir aſſaidiſt yet nor knewe.

Experience makith a man moſte certain
Of thing erthly, and of neceſſite
Sad counſaile requirith certaintie plain,
So ferre to movin thus whereto nede we?
But to my purpoſe, as thou commaundeſt me;
Shortly mine entent is thus, and none other,
Under thy licence to counſaile my brother.

How ſhouldiſt give any counſaile ſo yong,
Lacking experience? unto thyne owne ſpeche
I report me, I wote as for thy tong
Will ſerve the right wel, but than for to tech
I doubte me leſte that thy wit woll not rech;
Youth and Experience thou ſaiſt be not convert,
How ſhouldiſt thou then teche well unexpert?

Scripture witniſſith that God will oft ſhitte
Fro the' hie wittid man and ſhew it the child,
To hym I mene that of his ownè witte
Preſumeth not, but is debonaire and milde;
By counſaile I entend vertue to bilde,
Whiche of myne elders part have I borowed,
And part of experience, which I' have ſorowed.

Well, than, if it be as thou lettiſt fare
Shewe forthe thy doctrine, be not ought agaſte;
I woll the ſupporte; loke thou doe not ſpare
Maugre Age, although that he frete or gnaſte;
To aſke Age counſail herein were but waſt:
Boldély begin; go forthe to the proceſſe;
Fere not, ſithins thou art of ſoche ſureneſſe.

Graunt mercie, lorde! ſithin it the doeth like
To licence me, now I woll and dare boldly
Aſſaile my purpoſe; with ſcriptures autentike
My werke woll I ground, undirſet, and fortefie:
Aſpire my ginnyng, o thou wode Furie
Alecto, with thy ſuſtirs! and in ſpeciall
To the, mother of Jelouſie, Juno, I call.

Explicit Prologus.

THIS werkè who ſo ſhall ſe or yrede
Of incongruite doe me not impeche;
Ordinatelie behoveth me firſt to' procede
In deduccion thereof, right as the leche
His paciente's ſicknes oweth firſt for to ſeche,
The which knowen medicin he ſhould aplie,
And ſhortly as he can ſhape remedie.

Right ſo by counſail, willing the to' exhort,
O yong man proſperous! which doth abounde
In thy floures of luſte, belongeth on the ſort,
Me firſt to conſidir what 'is rote and ground
Of thy miſchefe, whiche is plainlie yfound
Woman, yfarcid with fraude and diſceipt,
To thy confuſion moſte allective baite.

Flie the miſwoman leſt ſhe the diſceve,
Thus ſaith Salomon, which taught was fullie
The falſhed of women in his daies to' conceve;
The lips of a ſtrumpet ben ſwetir than honie,
Her throte ſouplid with oile of flatirie,
How be it the ende and effecte of all
Bitterer is then any wormwode or gall.

Flie the miſwoman if thou love thy life:
Beware of the ſtraungir's blande eloquence;
Straungir I call her that is not thy wife;
Of her beautie have no concupiſcence,
Her countinaunce, pretendyng benevo'lence;
Beware her ſignes and eye ſo amiable,
Holde it for ferme thei ben diſcevable.

Lo, here an enſample what women be
In ther ſignis and countinaunce ſhortlie!
I woll ſhewin the how loviris thre
Ylovid one woman right entirelie,
Eche of them knewe othiri's maladie,
Wherefore it was all ther daily labour
Who coud approchin next in her favour.

At ſondrie ſeſons, as fortune requireth,
Severallie thei came to ſe her welfare,
But ones it happinid Love them ſo fireth,
To ſe ther ladie thei all would not ſpare;
Of othir's comyng none of them were ware,
Till all thei mette whereas thei in o place
Of ther ladie ſawe the deſirid face.

To ſuppir ſet, full ſmallie thei coude ete;
Full ſobir and demure in countinaunce,
There taried none of 'hem for any mete,
But on his ladie to give attendaunce,
And in ſecrete wiſe ſome ſignifiaunce
Of love to have, the whiche percevyng ſhe
Fetelie' executid thus her properte.

In due ſeſon, as ſhe alwaie aſpied
Every thyng to' execute convenientlie,
Her one lovir firſt frendèlie ſhe eyed,
The ſecond ſhe' offrid the cuppe curtiſlie,
The thirde ſhe gave a tokin ſecretlie,
Undirneth the borde ſhe trade on his fote,
Through his entrailis tiklid the herte rote.

By your leve, might I here aſke a queſtion
Of you my maiſtirs that ſewe lov'is trace,
To you likely belongeth the ſolucion
Whiche of theſe thre yſtode now in her grace?
Clerely to anſwere ye would aſke long ſpace,
The mattir is doubtfull and opinable;
To' aſcertain you I woll my ſelf enable.

Of the foreſayid thre my ſelf was one,
No man can anſwere it bettir then I;
Hertely of us bilovid was there none,
But Watt'is packe we bare all by and by,
Whiche at the laſt I my ſelf gan aſpie,
And time as me thought then I left the daunce:
O thoughtfull hertè, gret is thy grevaunce!

Hence fro me! hence! that me for to endite
Halpe aie here afore, o ye Muſis Nine!
Whilom ye were wont be mine aide and light,
My penne to direct, my brain to' illumine;
No lenger, alas! maie I ſewe your doctrine,
The freſhe luſtie metirs I wont to make
Have ben here afore I' uttirlie forſake.

Come hither Erinnys, and ye Furies all
Whiche ſer ben undre' us nigh the nethir pole,
Where Pluto reignith, o kyng Infernall!
Sende out thine Arpies, ſend Anguiſhe and Dole,
Miſerie and Wo, leve ye me not ſole,
Of right be preſent muſt Pain and Turment,
The pale Deth beſemeth not to be abſent.

To me now I call all this lothſome ſort
My paines t' encreſe, my ſorowes to augment,
For worthie' I am to' be bare of all comfort,
Thus ſith I have conſumid and miſpent
Not onely my daies but fivefolde talent
That my Lorde gave me, I can not recompence,
I maie n'ot to derely' abye my negligence.

By the' path of penaunce yet woll I revert
To the well of grace, mercie there to fetche;
Deſpiſiſt not God the meke contrite herte,
Of the cocke crowe, alas! I would not retche,
And yet it is not late in the' ſeconde wetche;
Mercie ſhall I purchace by 'inceſſaunt criyng,
The mercies of our Lorde er ſhall I ſyng.

But well mayiſt thou waile, wicked woman,
That thou ſhuldeſt diſceve thus an innocent;
In recompence of my ſinne, ſo 'as I can,
To' al wol I make and leve this monument,
In ſhewing part of thy falſhed is myne entent,
For all were to moche, I cann'ot, well I wote,
The cauſe ſhewith plainly he that thus wrote.

If al the yerth wer parchment ſcribable,
Spedie for the hande, and all manir wode
Wer hewed and proporcioned to pennis able,
All water ynke eithir in damme or flode,
Every man being a parfite ſcribe and gode,
The curſidneſſe yet and deſceipt of women
Coud not be ſhewid by the mene of penne.

I flie all odious reſemblaunces;
The devil'is bronde call women I might,
Whereby man is encenſid to miſchaunces,
Or a ſtinkyng roſe, that faire is in ſight,
Or dedly' empoiſon, like the ſugir white,
Whiche by his ſwetneſſe cauſith man to taſt,
And ſodainly fleeth and bringeth him to' his laſt. 119

It 'is not my manir to uſe ſoche langage,
But this my doctrine as I maie lawfullie
I' woll wholly grounde with aucthoritie ſage,
Willing wiſedome and vertue edefie:
Wine and women into apoſtaſie
Cauſe wiſemen to fall; what is that to ſaie?
Of wiſedome cauſe them to forget the waie: 126

Wherefore the wiſeman doith the advise,
In whoſe wordis can be founde no leſyng,
With the ſtraungir to ſittin in no wiſe
Whiche is not thy wife; fall not in clippyng
With her, but beware eke of her kiſſyng,
Kepe with her in wine no altercacion,
Leſt thyne herte fall by inclinacion. 133

Maie a man, thinkiſt, hide and ſafely laie
Fire in his boſome without empairement
And brenning of his clothes? or whider he may
Walke on hotte colis his fete not ybrente?
As who ſayith naie, and whereby is mente
This foreſaied proverbe and ſimilitude,
But that thou ridde the plainly to denude 140

From the flattirirs forgettyng her gide,
The gide of her youth, I mene Shamfaſtnes,
Whiche ſhould cauſe her maidinhed to abide,
Her Godd'is beheſte eke ſhe full recheleſſe
Not retching committeth to forgetfulnes,
Neithir God ne ſhame in her havyng place;
Nedis muſt ſoche a woman lackè grace. 147

And all that neighin her in waie of ſin
To tourne of grace ſhall lacke the influence,
The pathis of life no more to come in,
Wherefore firſt frendè the with Sapience,
Remembring God, and aftir with Prudence,
To thyne owne wele, that ſo thei may the kepe,
Unto thyne hertè leſt her wordis crepe. 154

In his boke where I take my moſtè ground,
And in his Proverbis, ſage Salomon
Tellith a talè which is plainly found
In the fiveth chapter, whedir in dede don
Or mekely feined to our inſtruccion
Let clerkes determine, but this am I ſure,
Moche like thyng I my ſelf have had in ure. 161

At my windowe, ſaieth he, I lokid out,
Faire yongè peple where I ſawe many,
Emong 'hem all, as I lokid about,
To a yong man fortuned I lent myne eye,
Eſtraungid from his minde it was likely;
By the' ſtrete at a cornir, nigh his own hous,
He went about with eye right curious. 168

When that the daie his light began withdrawe,
And the night approchid in the twinlight,
How a woman came and met hym I ſawe,
Talking with him undir ſhade of the night;
Now bleſſid be God (quod ſhe) of his might,
Whiche hath fulfillid myne hert'is deſire,
Aſlaked my painis, which were hote as fire. 175

And yet myne aucthour, as it is gode ſkill,
To folowe I muſt tell her araiment;
She was full nicè ſoulis like to ſpill,
As nice in countenaunce yet as in garmente,
For janglyng ſhe was of reſt impaciente,
Wandiryng ſtill in no place ſhe yſtode,
But reſtleſſe now, and now out forthe ſhe yode: 182

Now in the hous ſhe was, now in the ſtrete,
Now at a cornir ſhe ſtandeth in awaite,
Inceſſauntly buſie her praie to gete,
To bring to the lure whom ſhe doith laite.
Now where I left unto my mattir ſtraite
I woll tournin again, how ſhe hym met,
Swetily kiſſid, and frendly him grette. 189

With wordes of curtiſie many'and diverſe,
Right as in part I have before ytolde,
Now as I can I purpoſe to reherſe
How ſhe flattiring ſaied with viſage bolde,
I have made vowes and offringes manifolde
For thy ſake, o myne herte! o my love dere!
This daie I thanke God all performid were; 196

Therefore I came out and made thus asterte,
Verie desirous your welfare to se;
Now I have seen you plesid is myne herte;
In faithe shall none yhave my love but ye;
As true as I am to you be to me:
I praie you hertily, dere herte! come home,
No man should be to me so much welcome.

And in godę faithe, the sothè for to saie,
Your comyng unto me ran in my thought:
Harke in your ere; my beddè freshe and gaie
I have behanged with tapettis new bought,
From Egypte and from far countries ybrought,
Steinid with many a lustie freshe hue,
Excedyng golde or jaspir in valuę:

My chambir is strowed with mirre and insence,
With sote sav'oring aloes and sinnamome,
Brethyng an aromatike redolence,
Surmountyng olibane in any man's dome;
Ye shall bitwene my brestes rest if ye come;
Let us now have our desirid halsyng,
For we maie safe be till in the mornyng.

Myne husband is not at home, he is went
Forthe in his journey a farre waie from hence,
A bagge with money he hath with hym hent,
As hym thought nedefull was for his expence;
Unto my wordis give faithe and credence;
Now is the monè yong and of light dulle,
Ere he come home it woll be at the fulle.

And thus craftily hath ſhe hym beſette
With her lime rodis, and pantir, and ſnare,
The ſelie ſoule ycaught hath in her nette,
Of her ſugrid mouthe, alas! nothyng ware;
And thus is he left graceleſſe and bare
Of helpe, and comfort, and ghoſtlie ſuccour,
And, furthirmore, as ſayith myne aucthour,

As a beſt ledde to his deth doith pante
This yong man folowith her in that ſtounde,
And as a wanton lambe full ignorante
How he is pulled and drawin to be bounde
Unto the tyme he hath his deth'is wounde,
And like a birde that haſtith to the grin,
Not knowyng the perill of' his life therein.

Now, gentle ſonne, ſaith Salomon, take hede,
My wordis in thy breſt kepe and make faſte,
Let her not thy mynde in her waies miſlede,
Be not decevid, leſith not thy taſte,
Many hath ſhe woundid, many doune caſte,
Many ſtrong men by her hath loſte ther breth;
Her waies are waies of hell ledyng to deth.

And in this lite narracion precedente
The womanne's manifolde gilt I attende,
The yongè man, alas, how ſhe hath ſhent!
Diſcevid her huſbande her own next frend;
In theſe bothe her God ſhe doith offende;
To breke her ſpouſail to 'her is of no weight.
Furdirmore to ſhew woman's craft and ſleight,

A woman at her dore sate on a ſtall
To ſe folke paſſe by ſtretes of the cite,
With eye and countinaunce eke ſhe gan call,
If there be any pretie 'one come to me,
Come hithir ye pigges nye, ye little babe!
At laſt ſhe ſaied to a yong man hertleſſe,
Of her deceipt unware and defenceleſſe,

Moche ſwetir, ſhe ſaith, and more acceptable,
Is drinke when it is ſtollin privily
Then when it 'is taken in form avowable;
Bread hiddin and gottin jeoperdouſlie
Ymuſt nedis be ſwete and ſemblablie;
Veniſon ſtolin is aie the ſwetir,
The ferthir the narowir ſet the bettir.

And whom this woman, ſaith Salomon, feſtes
The yong man wotith not whom ſhe doth fede;
Of the darke depeneſſe of hell ben her geſtes;
Beware, o yong man! therefore I the rede,
And how be it chiefly for thy gode ſpede
This werke to compile I have take in charge
I muſt of pitie my charitie 'enlarge;

With the ſelie man whiche is thus begiled,
Her huſband I mene, I wol wepe and waile
His painfull infortune, whereby reviled
Cauſeleſſe he is, nevir to convaile;
Every man yong and olde woll him aſſaile
With wordes of occaſion with the loth name,
And, alas, gode ſoule! he nothyng to blame:

But ſhe whiche that coud ſo ill doe and wolde,
Hers be the blame for her foule demerite,
And leve that opprobrious name Cokcold
To apropir to hym as in diſpite:
Ranſake yet we wouldin if that we might
Of this wordè the true ortographie,
The verie diſcent and etymologie.

The well and grounde of the firſte invencion
To knowe the' ortographie we muſt derive,
Whiche is Coke and Cold in compoſicion,
By reſon as nigh as I can contrive,
Then how it is writtin we knowe belive;
But yet, lo! by what reſon and what grounde
Ywas it of theſe two wordis compounde?

As of one cauſe to give very judgement,
The' etymology let us firſte beholde;
Eche lettir an whole worde doeth repreſent,
As C put for Colde, and O put for Olde,
K is for Knave; thus divers men don holde:
The firſte parte of this name we have yfounde,
Let us ethimologiſe the ſecounde.

As the firſte findir mente I am right ſure
C for Calot, for Of we havin O,
And L for Leude, and D for Demenure,
The craft of the' enventour ye maie ſe, lo!
How one name ſignifieth perſonis two,
A Colde Olde Knave, Cokcold himſelf wenyng,
And eke a Calot of Leude Demenyng.

The feconde caufe of the' impoficion
Of this forefayid name was jeloufie:
To be jeloufe is gretift occafion
To be cokcold that men can wel afpie,
And though the paffion be very firie,
And of continuell fervence and hete,
The pacient aye fuffrith colde on his fete. 315

And who that 'is jelous and aye in a drede
Is full of melancolie and gallie ire;
His wiv'is nofe if fhe onis miffetrede
He woll cutte of, ye, and he woll confpire
His deth who evir that woll her defire,
Whiche fhe percevyng braftith ftreight his gall;
And anone his grete wodeneffe doith fall. 322

As fone as fhe hath knit for hym that knot
Now is he tame that was fo ramagious;
Mekely fittith he doune and taketh his lot;
Layid ben now his lokes fo furious,
And he but late as a cocke batailous,
Hote in his quarell, to avenge hym bolde,
Now is he callid bothè Coke and Colde. 329

This faiyng, to' all curtifie diffonant,
Whiche yfemith that it of malice grewe,
In this rude tretife I ne woll not plant
As parcill thereof, but onely to fhewe
The opinion of the talcatife fhrewe,
Whiche in ill faiyng is ever merie,
No man as I is thereof fo werie. 336

But I as parcill of this my lite boke
Woll graffin in fome fadde counfaill wherby
The weddid man, if that he daigne to loke
In it, the bettir fhall mowin hym gie,
And provide for his faied infortunie,
Whiche as I have fayid with him complaine
I woll, as partinir of his grete paine. 343

As mofte expedient unto his wele
I woulde that all jeloufie were abjecte,
If he be jelous that he it concele,
And in his labour be full circumfpecte
To knowe her waies if thei femin fufpecte,
And not for to breke, for one worde brokin
She woll not miffe but fhe woll be wrokin. 350

Forbid her not that thou n'oldift have don,
For loke what thyng fo e're fhe is forbod
To that of all thyngis fhe is moft prone,
Namily if it be ill and no gode;
Till it be executid fhe' is nigh wode:
Soche is a woman, and foche is her fete;
Her craft by craft than labour to defete. 357

If thou hereaftir, now a fingle man,
Shouldift be jelous if thou haddeft a wife,
Wedde not but if thou can truft a woman,
For els fhouldift thou lede a carefull life;
That thou mofte lothift fhould ybe full rife;
Yet I ne will gainfaie matrimonie,
But *Melius eft nubere quàm uri.* 364

That is to saie, Bettir is in wedlocke
A wife to take, as the churche doith kenne,
Then for to ben undir the flesh'is yoke,
In fleshlie lustis alwaie for to brenne;
But, as I sayid, for all jelous menne,
So thei livin chaste, I holde it lasse ill
That thei ne wedde not than them selfin spill. 371

The single man whiche that is yet to wedde,
And not the weddid man, thus I arede,
To warne hym now he is to farre yspedde,
It is all to late hym for to forbede,
But let hym take as for his ownè nede
Soche counsaile as is hym before ytolde,
These wordis folowyng eke to beholde. 378

Thy watir to kepe the wiseman doeth teche,
That thou in no wise let it have issue,
At a narowe rifte waie it woll yseche;
And semblablie the woman that 'is untrue
To give her fre walke in all wise eschue;
If she at large, not at thine handè, walke
She woll the shamin, thou shalt it not balke. 385

Weddid or single thus saith the wiseman,
Her which that both daie and night evirmore
Lithe in thy bosome, wife or yet lemman,
Love not to hote, lest thou repent it sore,
Lest she the bryngin into some ill lore:
Thy wife not to love yet I n'ill support,
But that thou dote not thus I thè exhort, 392

Lo! if thou love her love thine honeſtie;
Be ſhe not idill for what woll betide;
If ſhe ſit idle' of very neceſſitie
Her mindè woll ſerchin ferre and eke wide,
Namelie if ſhe be not accompanide:
How accompanied? not with yongè men,
But with maidinis I mene or women.

Maidin ſervauntes be right convenient
In houſe to helpin to doe her ſervice,
Inwhom ſhe maie uſe her commaundèment
In the ſeſon all at her owne device;
To techin 'hem gode yeve her thine advice
To make them huſwifis: thus buſineſſe
Maie yet refrainin her from idleneſſe.

But bid not her that thou wolt have her do,
Of thine entent that might be a lettyng,
But craſtily encourage her therto
By othir menis, as by commendyng,
And not to moche, but duily mengyng
Bothe praiſe and blamè, and in thy reſon
Firſt praiſe wiſily the place and ſeſon.

Of faithfull will and hertè full tender
One thing I call into rememberaunce
Again, whiche though my wit be to ſlender
Aftir my powir and my ſuffiſaunce
I purpoſe to makin a purveiaunce,
Sith women of nature ben chaungeable,
Frele, and not ware, alſo diſcevable.

Be it that thy wife be excellently gode,
That none be bet of diſpoſicion,
In proceſſe of time ſhe might turn her mode
By ſome miſſe-liver's inſtigacion;
Divers men to thilke occupacion
Aplyin daily ther mynde and eke herte,
From ther godeneſſe frele women to perverte. 427

If thou aſpie any ſuſpect perſon
Drawe to thy wife, beware in allè wiſe;
To hym nor her of thy ſuſpeccion
Breke not one worde though that thin herte agriſe;
Kindle no fire and no ſmoke woll ariſe:
Although he be of a corrupt entent
She peraventure is not of aſſent. 434

Explicit.

A SAIYNG OF DAN JOHN.

Ther bethe foure thingis that makith man a fol
Honour firſt puttith him into outrage,
And aldir next ſolitarie and ſole;
The ſecond is unweldy crokid age;
Women alſo bring men into dotage;
And mighty wine in many divers wiſe
Diſtemprin folke whiche ben yholdin wiſe.

YET OF THE SAME.

Ther ben foure thingis cauſing grete folye;
Honour firſt; and ſecond unwildy age;
Women and wine I dare eke ſpecify
Ymake wiſe men fallin into dotage;
Wherfore by counſeil of philoſophers ſage
In gret honour lernith this rule of me,
With thine eſtate havith humilite.

MOTTO TO JACKE UPLAND.

Of freris I have told before
Now in a making of a crede,
And yet I could tell worſe and more,
But men would werrien it to rede.

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For Chaucer's Prophecie *fee vol. I. p.* 247.

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